STEFAN GROSSMAN's

EARLY MASTERS of AMERICAN BLUES GUITAR

AUTHENTIC GUITAR TAB EDITION

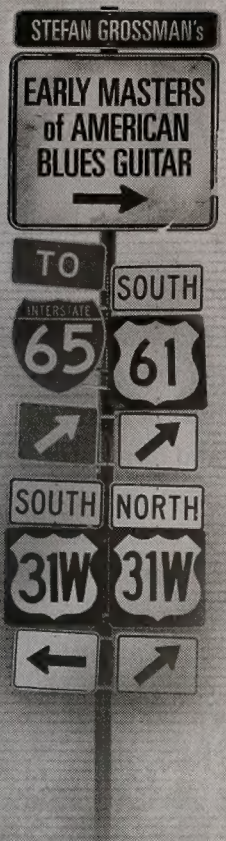
# COUNTRY BLUES GUITAR

EDITED AND TRANSCRIBED BY STEFAN GROSSMAN

ORIGINAL VINTAGE RECORDINGS

- CONTAINS VINTAGE ORIGINAL ARTIST'S RECORDINGS
- LISTEN AND LEARN FROM ORIGINAL, CLASSIC RECORDINGS
- TRANSCRIBED BY NOTED BLUES-ROOTS AUTHORITY STEFAN GROSSMAN

Alfred

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*Photos, unless otherwise noted, are courtesy of Stefan Grossman.*

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# Introduction

*by Stefan Grossman*

***"There are fashions in music as in anything else, and folk-song presents no exception to the rule. (For the last several years, the most popular type of Negro song has been that peculiar, barbaric sort of melody called 'blues,' with its irregular rhythm, its lagging briskness, its mournful liveliness of tone.) It has a jerky tempo, as of a cripple dancing because of some irresistible impulse. A 'blues' (or does one say a 'blue'? What is the grammar of the thing?) likes to end its stanza abruptly, leaving the listener expectant for more—though, of course, there is no fixed law about it. One could scarcely imagine a convention of any kind in connection with this Negroid free music. It is partial to the three-line stanza instead of the customary one of four or more, though not insisting on it, and it ends with a high note that has the effect of incompleteness. The close of a stanza comes with a shock like the whip-crack surprise at the end of an O. Henry story, for instance—a cheap trick, but effective as a novelty. It sings of themes remote from those of the old spirituals, and its incompleteness of stanza makes the listener gasp, and perhaps fancy that the censor had deleted the other line."***

— published 1915: *On the Trail of Negro Folk Songs*, Dorothy Scarborough

I have been playing the guitar for years. I started at the age of nine and by the time I reached fifteen I was studying with Rev. Gary Davis, one of the greatest exponents of fingerstyle blues and gospel guitar playing. Over the last forty years of studying, teaching, composing and writing, I still find my musical interests centered around a type of music classified as the Blues.

Much has been written about the story of the blues and its lyrical content. Without doubt, the blues hold a vital story of an oppressed people. Its lyrics are an American form of poetry at its finest. Its influence can be felt in classical compositions as well as to the most avant garde pieces of "sound music." Everyday we are bombarded by segments of the blues story that have permeated into the mainstream of today's pop music.

My interest for blues has always centered around the guitar. The sounds of blues guitar, whether finger-picked, flatpicked, played with a bottleneck, played on the guitarist's lap or strummed simply, has always intrigued me. My first encounter with blues music came via a Folkways Record of Big Bill Broonzy. I suppose the high powered voice of Big Bill combined with his exciting guitar playing was enough to capture the spirit of any young "city-billy" trying to learn how to tackle those six strings on his newly acquired guitar.

I spent several months buying records that featured Black men holding guitars. I was not familiar with the many names of bluesmen and could only use the album covers as my guide. I soon discovered names like Blind Lemon Jefferson, Blind Blake, Son House, Charlie Patton, Lightnin' Hopkins, Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters, Mississippi John Hurt, Elizabeth Cotten, and Rev. Gary Davis. The names in themselves held enough attraction for me. Their music was something else completely. Every record produced a new and profound listening experience. I became obsessed to hear *all* the new and old blues records.

As this was happening, I had the fortune to meet and study under Rev. Gary Davis. He patiently taught me many of the marvels of blues guitar playing. I was indeed very fortunate

in finding Rev. Davis as here was a great bluesman that was also a self-acclaimed teacher. He thrived on teaching interested students and he himself had mastered many guitar techniques and styles of other musicians. Rev. Davis was unique in this respect. Firstly, he was a teacher and had shown many famous blues musicians how to play (this list is a long one and contains Blind Boy Fuller, Brownie McGee, Larry Johnson, Ry Cooder, Dave Bromberg and many others). Secondly, he differed from other bluesmen in that he had perfected and studied many styles. He could play one tune in a variety of ways and follow the development of that song from Texas, to Mississippi, to the Carolinas, to the northern cities and then back. It was from Rev. Davis that I became aware of the regional blues styles that the Black bluesmen had developed in America.

During the same period, friends of mine were hitting the highways trying to rediscover "legendary" names. Skip James, Bukka White, Son House and Mississippi John Hurt were being sought after. Within a one year period all of these men were found, recorded, and brought North to perform to eagerly awaiting audiences. The "blues revival" was in full swing. I started to interview and study with these musicians. I was trying to put pieces together in the jigsaw puzzle of blues guitar styles.

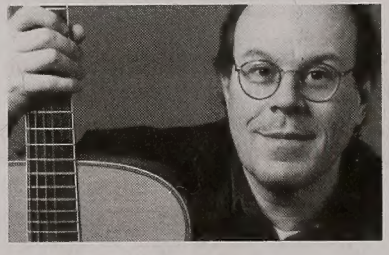
This collection presents a wide variety of wonderful Country Blues arrangements. You should have fun tackling the arrangements of Scrapper Blackwell, Blind Blake, Big Bill Broonzy, Rev. Gary Davis, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Lonnie Johnson, Charley Jordan and Josh White. It is fundamental in your understanding of these arrangements to hear the original performances which we have included on the CD that accompanies this book.

My thanks to Jas Obrect and Mark Humphrey for writing the biographical sketches of each bluesman. The stories of these great men are intertwined with their music.

Enjoy and if you have any questions or suggestions you can contact me via www.guitarvideos.com.

Keep picking,

Stefan Sowman



# Explanation of the TAB/Music System

***"...Learning from listening is unquestionably the best way, the only way that suits this kind of music. You are setting the notes down for a record of what happened, a record that can be studied, preserved and so on, a necessary and useful companion to the recordings of the actual sounds. I keep thinking of this as I transcribe; if you could do it, it would be good to have a legend across each page reading: 'Listen to the record if you want to learn the song.'"***

—Hally Wood (taken from the Publisher's Foreword to the *New Lost City Ramblers Songbook.*)

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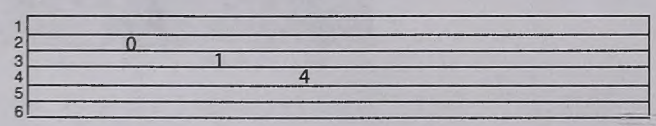
These words are most suitable for introducing the tablature system, for tablature is just a guide and should be used in conjunction with the recordings. Tablature is not like music notation, however the combination of TAB and music in an arrangement forms a complete language. Used together with the original recordings, they give a total picture of the music.

The TAB system does not attempt to show rhythms or accents. These can be found on the music or heard in the recordings. Music notation tackles these articulations to a degree, but the overall sensations, the feel and the soul of music cannot be wholly captured on the written page. In the words of the great Sufi Hazrat Inayat Khan, "...the traditional ancient songs of India composed by great Masters have been handed down from father to son. The way music is taught is different from the Western way. It is not always written, but is taught by imitation. The teacher sings and the pupil imitates and the intricacies and subtleties are learned by imitation."

This is the theme I've tried to interpolate into the tablature. Tablature is the roadmap and you are the driver. Now to the TAB.

Each space indicates a string. The top space represents the first string, second space the second string, etc. A zero means an open string, a number in the space indicates the fretted position, for instance a 1 in a space indicates the first fret of that string.

In the diagram below, the zero is on the second string and indicates the open second string is played. The 1 is placed on the third string and signifies the first fret of the third string. Likewise, the 4 is in the fourth space and indicates the fourth fret of the fourth string.

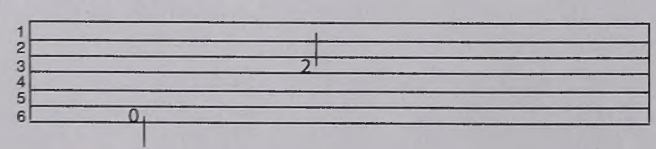



Generally, for fingerpicking styles you will be playing the thumb, index, and middle fingers of your picking hand. To indicate the picking finger in TAB, the stems go up and line up down from the numbers.

A. A stem down means that your thumb strikes the note.

B. If a stem is up, your index or middle finger strikes the note. The choice of finger is left up to you, as your fingers will dictate what is most comfortable, especially when playing a song up to tempo!

C. The diagram below shows an open sixth string played with the thumb followed by the second fret of the third string played with the index or middle finger:



In most cases, the thumb will play an alternating bass pattern, usually on the bass strings. The index and middle fingers play melodic notes on the first, second and third strings. Please remember, this is not a rule; there are many exceptions.

In fingerpicking there are two "picking" styles: regular picking and "pinching" two notes together. A pinch is shown in the TAB by a line connecting two notes. A variation of this can also be two treble notes pinched with a bass note. Follow the examples below from left to right.

1) The open sixth string is played with the thumb.

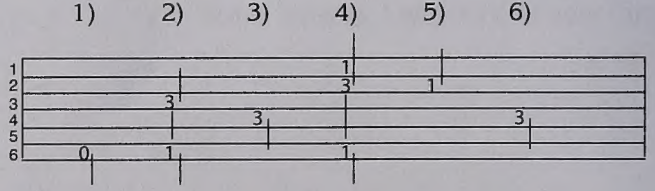
2) The first fret of the sixth string is pinched together with the third fret on the third string. The sixth string is played with the thumb, the third string with the index finger.

3) The thumb strikes the third fret of the fourth string.

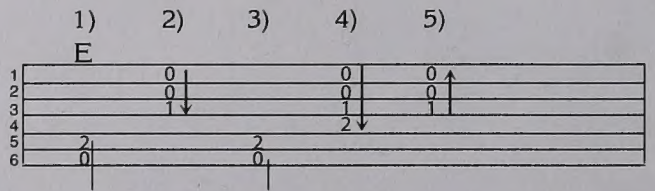
4) The first fret/sixth string is played with the thumb; it's pinched with two notes in the treble. The index and middle fingers strike the first fret/first string and the third fret/second string.

5) The next note is the index finger hitting the first fret/second string.

6) Lastly, the bass note is played with the thumb on the third fret/fourth string.




There are certain places in blues and contemporary guitar that call for the use of either strumming techniques or accented bass notes. The TAB illustrates these as follows:



1) The thumb hits the open sixth string and the second fret on the fifth string should also sound. For example, play an E chord. Now strike the open string and vary the force of your attack. Try hitting it hard enough so that the fifth string vibrates as well. This technique is very important for developing a full sound and the right alternating bass sound.

2) Next, the arrow notation indicates a brush and the arrowhead indicates the direction of the brush.

   A. If the arrowhead is pointed down, the hand brushes up towards the sixth string.

   B. If pointed up, the hand brushes down towards the first string.

   C. The number of strings to be played by the brush is shown by the length of the arrows. For example, this arrow shows a brush up toward the sixth string, but indicates to strike only the first, second and third strings.

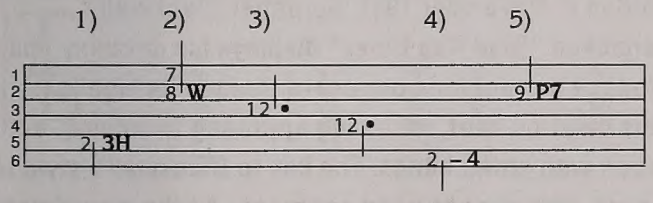
   D. The brush can be done with your whole hand, index finger or middle and ring finger. Let comfort plus a full and "right" sound guide your choice.

3) The third set of notes again shows the sixth string/open bass note played with the thumb and being struck hard enough to make the fifth string/second fretted position sound.

4) Once more, an arrow pointed downward indicates a brush up. This example forms an E chord and the brush up includes the first, second, third, and fourth strings.

5) The last set of notes has an arrow pointed upward, indicating a brush downward striking the first, second, and third strings.

Here are several special effects that are also symbolized in tablature:




1) HAMMER-ON: Designated by an "H" which is placed after the stem on the fret to be hammered. In the example above, fret the second fret/fifth string and pick it with your thumb. Then "hammer-on" (hit hard) the third fret/fifth string (i.e., fret the third fret/fifth string). This is an all-in-one, continuous motion which will produce two notes rapidly with one picking finger strike.

2) WHAM: Designated by a "W." In the example the eighth fret/second string is "whammed" and played with the seventh fret/first string. Both notes are played together with your index and middle fingers respectively. The whammed note is "stretched." We do this by literally bending the note up. We can "wham" the note up a half tone, full tone, etc.

3) HARMONICS: Symbolized by a dot (•). To play a harmonic, gently lay your finger directly above the indicated fret (don't press down!) The two notes in the example are both harmonics. The first on the twelfth fret/third string is played with the index/middle finger, while the second note—twelfth fret/fourth string—is played with the thumb.

4) SLIDE: Shown with a dash (–). Play the second fret/sixth string and then slide up to the fourth fret of the sixth string. This is a continuous movement, the string is struck once with your thumb.

5) PULL-OFF: "P" designates a "pull-off." Fret both the seventh and ninth frets on the second string. Play the ninth fret with your index/middle finger and then quickly remove it in the same stroke, leaving the seventh fret/second string. Pull-offs are generally in a downward direction.

6) In certain cases, other specific symbols are added to the TAB:

   A. For ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS, an "X" is placed after the fretted position.

   B. For SNAPPING, a note an indication may be given with a symbol or the written word.

Many times, these special techniques are combined. For instance, putting a pull-off and a hammer-on together. Coordination of your fretting and picking hands will be complex initially, but the end results are exciting and fun to play.

## PICKING HAND POSITION FOR FINGERPICKING STYLES

The Classical and Flamenco schools have strict right-hand rules, however for this style of acoustic fingerpicking, there are no rules, only suggestions. Your right hand position should be dictated by comfort, however in observation of many well-known fingerpickers, I found one hand position similarity—they all tend to rest their little finger and/or ring finger on the face of the guitar. This seems to help their balance for accenting notes and control of the guitar. Experiment with this position, it may feel uncomfortable at first. I ask my students to perfect this position and then compare the sound to when their finger(s) were not placed on the face of the guitar. They usually find the sound is greatly improved when some contact is kept with the guitar face.

## MUSIC NOTATION

We have somewhat adapted the music notation in that this also shows whether the note is picked with your thumb or index/middle fingers. The stems of the music notes correspond to the direction of the TAB stems. I hope this will make the music notation clearer to fingerpicking guitarists.

I hope you will feel at home and comfortable with the tablature and musical notations. Remember, these are only road maps indicating where and how you should place your fingers. The playing and musical interpretation is up to you.

# Scrapper Blackwell

While he's virtually unknown today, Scrapper Blackwell was among the most influential of the early blues guitarists, mostly due to the enormous popularity of his records with pianist Leroy Carr. Francis Blackwell was born in Syracuse, North Carolina, in 1903, and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana. His grandmother provided his famous nickname, "Scrapper," due to his feisty nature, and, like Jimi Hendrix, he was part Cherokee Indian. His father was lead fiddler in a string band, and Scrapper fashioned his first instrument from a cigar box and mandolin neck. Once some crapshooters gave him a real guitar, he began teaching himself folk songs and blues. "When I did, went to playin' the real blues, I was gone, just gone," he remembered decades later. "Know who learned me that? Nobody. It just come to me like anything else. The minute I saw the string, I hit it. And when I hit it, it was the right string."

An inveterate drinker, Blackwell was selling moonshine for a living when he met pianist Leroy Carr at Indianapolis house party in 1927. They began playing together, and launched their recording career in June 1928 with the sentimental "How Long How Long Blues." The 78 became a runaway hit and made them the most popular piano-guitar team in the country. So many copies of the 78 were pressed that the original metal masters wore out, causing Vocalion to record the duo's "How Long How Long Blues No. 2" and "How Long How Long Blues No. 3" in November 1928. The original, though, is the version that became a blues staple. Young Robert Johnson and Muddy Waters were impressed enough to make it one of the first songs they learned to play, and a decade after its release, Johnson recast its melody as "Love In Vain."

During the Depression, when few other blues artists recorded, Carr and Blackwell made dozens of 78s and reportedly became rich men, netting between $300 and $500 apiece at sessions. The mournful-voiced Carr manned his piano keys with a mellow, rolling touch, playing stride bass patterns, walking octaves, chords, and solo flourishes. He preferred the keys of Ab and Eb, and Scrapper typically accompanied him with ringing chords and melodically inventive solos that were usually played in standard tuning with a capo. In all, the duo's infectious, swinging sound graced more than 160 sides, many of them co-written with Blackwell's sister Minnie. The well-promoted duo played Chicago, Nashville, and New York City, and occasionally performed promotional stunts such as appearing in the window of a Cincinnati music store, mouthing lyrics as a loudspeaker blared their latest hits to passersby.

Scrapper Blackwell made his final sides with Leroy Carr on February 25, 1935. After an all-night party that April, Carr died of acute alcoholism, just one month past his 30th birthday. The *Indianapolis Reader* reported that "thousands thronged the Patton Funeral Home for one last look at the man whose bizarre combination of bluish notes struck a deep sympathetic response in the souls of thousands of colored people throughout the country." Ironically, the last song the duo recorded was "Six Cold Feet in the Ground."

Heartbroken, Blackwell never quite got over Carr's death. He cut "My Old Pal Blues (Dedicated to the Memory of Leroy Carr)" and a few other sides with pianist Dot Rice in July 1935, and didn't record again until for 23 years. He continued to play at house parties and taverns, but earned his wages laboring in an asphalt factory. "Rediscovered" in the late 1950s, Blackwell cut a couple of albums worth of material in Indianapolis. Tragically, he was gunned down in a back alley on October 6, 1962. A generation later, his music became a stylistic cornerstone for Rory Gallagher, who introduced his songs to audiences around the world. "I like Scrapper Blackwell a lot," Rory enthused. "Even when he recorded late in life, he was in great form! To my ears, he had actually improved as a player."

Recorded in November 1931, Scrapper Blackwell's fingerpicked "Blue Day Blues" displays his uncanny ability to produce a great tone on record. Among its highlights are his dead-on beat, intriguing approach to soloing, and flirtation with string bends. The key to Blackwell's style is in a good, strong right-hand approach. As the man himself sang during another song recorded on the same day, "I do believe I was born with blues in my right hand."

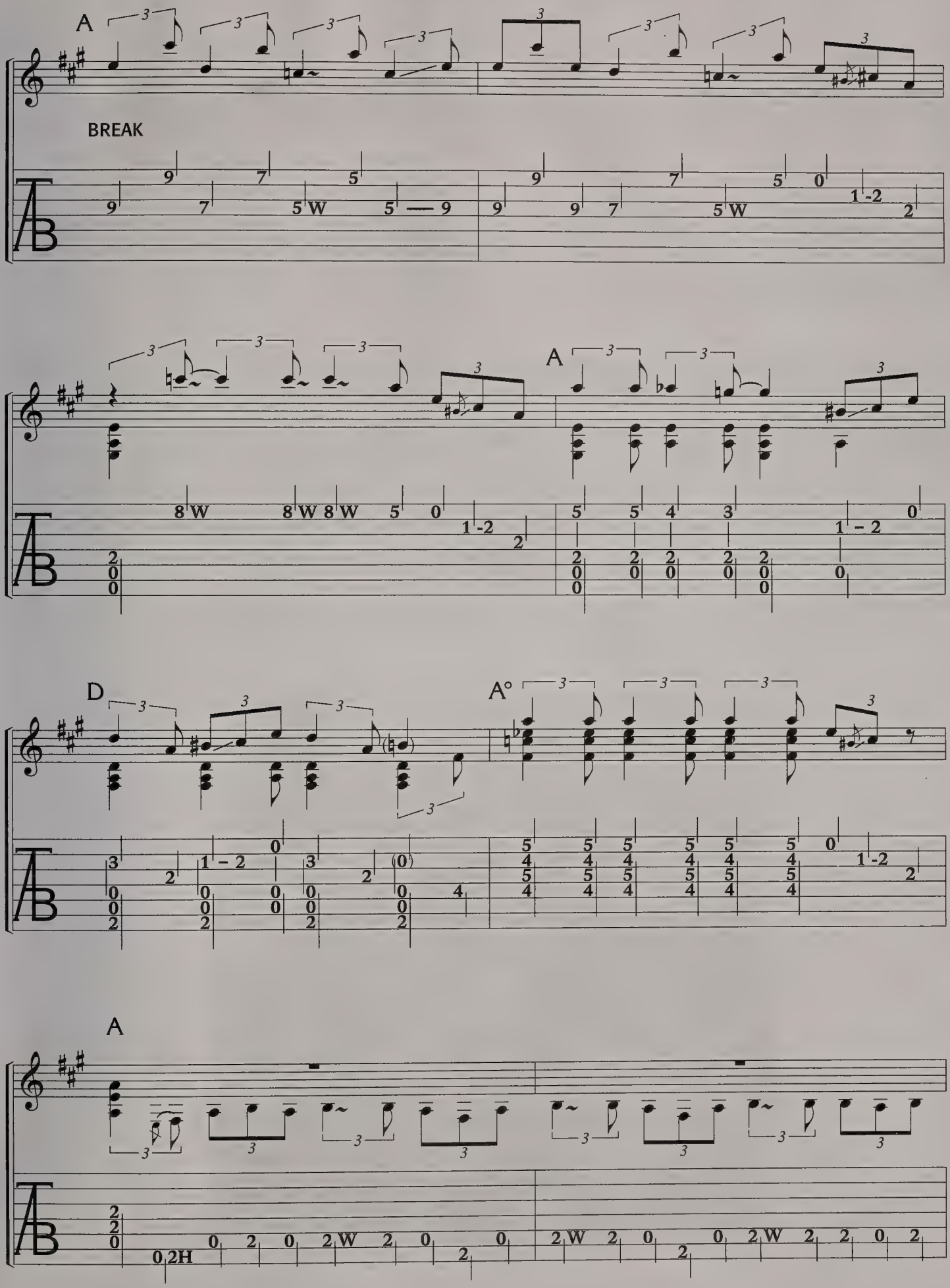
While he was most famous for his duets with Leroy Carr, Scrapper Blackwell made many records on his own. His first was one of his best: "Kokomo Blues," cut for Vocalion in June 1928. Blues and rock aficionados will quickly recognize this song as an inspiration for Robert Johnson's "Sweet Home Chicago," which, in turn, has also been covered by Eric Clapton and countless others. Again, the key to Blackwell's approach is in the right hand.

# Blue Day Blues

as performed by
Scrapper Blackwell

Standard Tuning

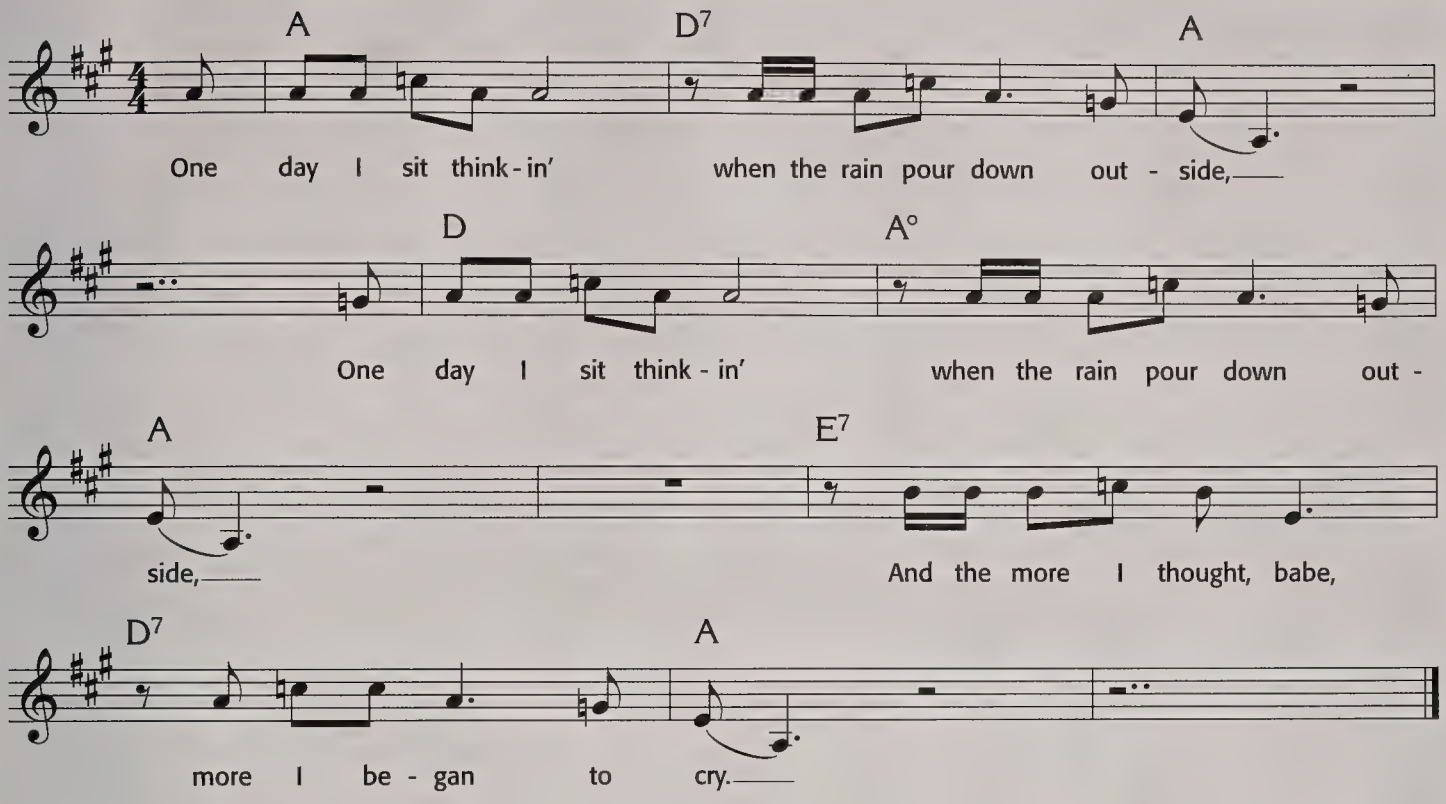
D
A°
A
E7
D7
A
To BREAK...


A
BREAK
A
D
A°
A

*Scrapper Blackwell*

# Blue Day Blues

## Lead Sheet




1. One day I sit thinkin' when the rain pour down outside,
   One day I sit thinkin' when the rain pour down outside,
   And the more I thought, babe, more I began to cry.

2. Today has been a long old lonesome day,
   Today has been a long old lonesome day,
   And it looks like tomorrow's gonna be the same old way.

3. My days seem lonesome and my nights they are so long,
   My days seem lonesome and my nights they are so long,
   I'll be mighty glad when them old blue days are gone.

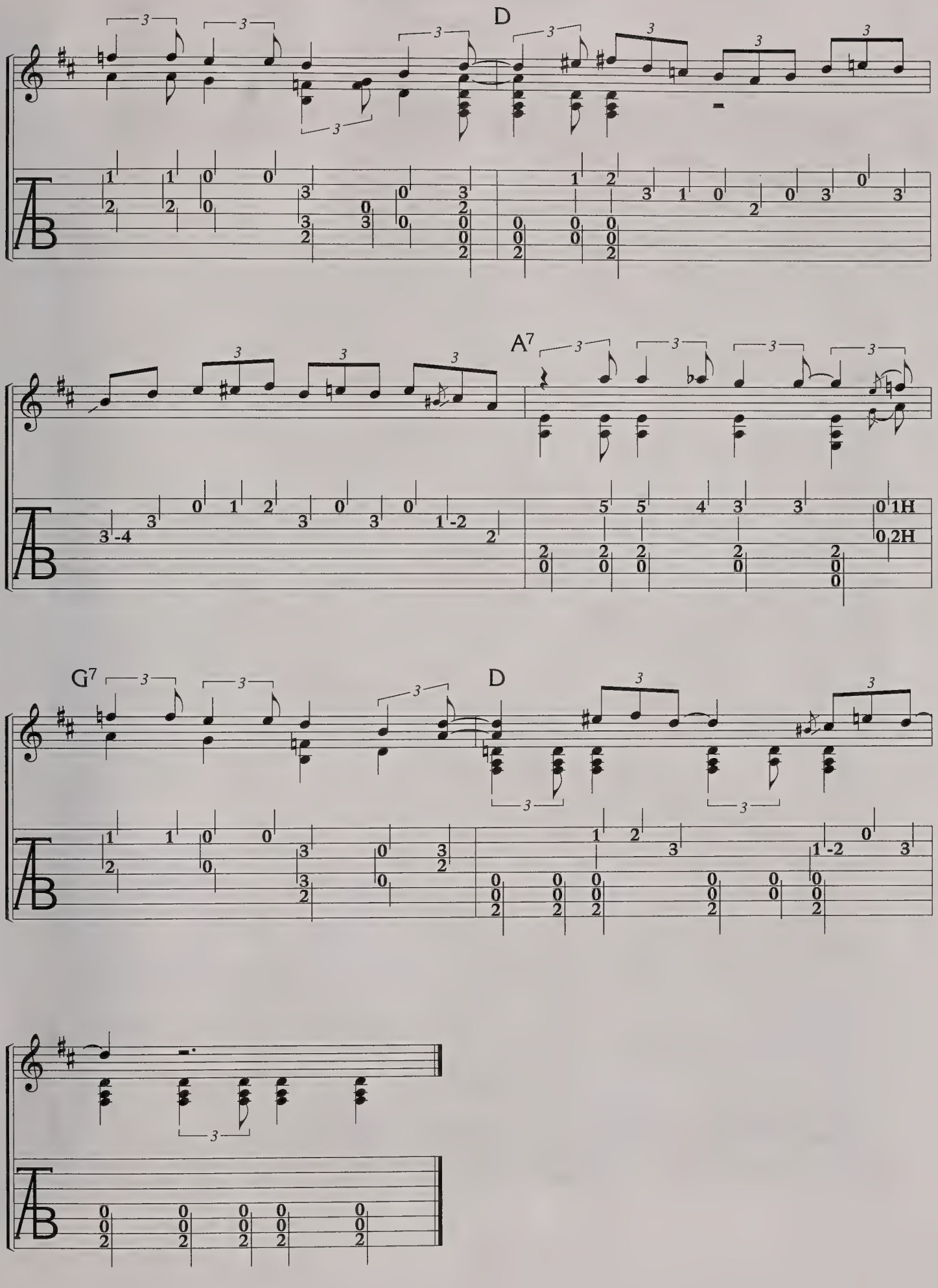
# Kokomo Blues

as performed by
Scrapper Blackwell

Standard Tuning

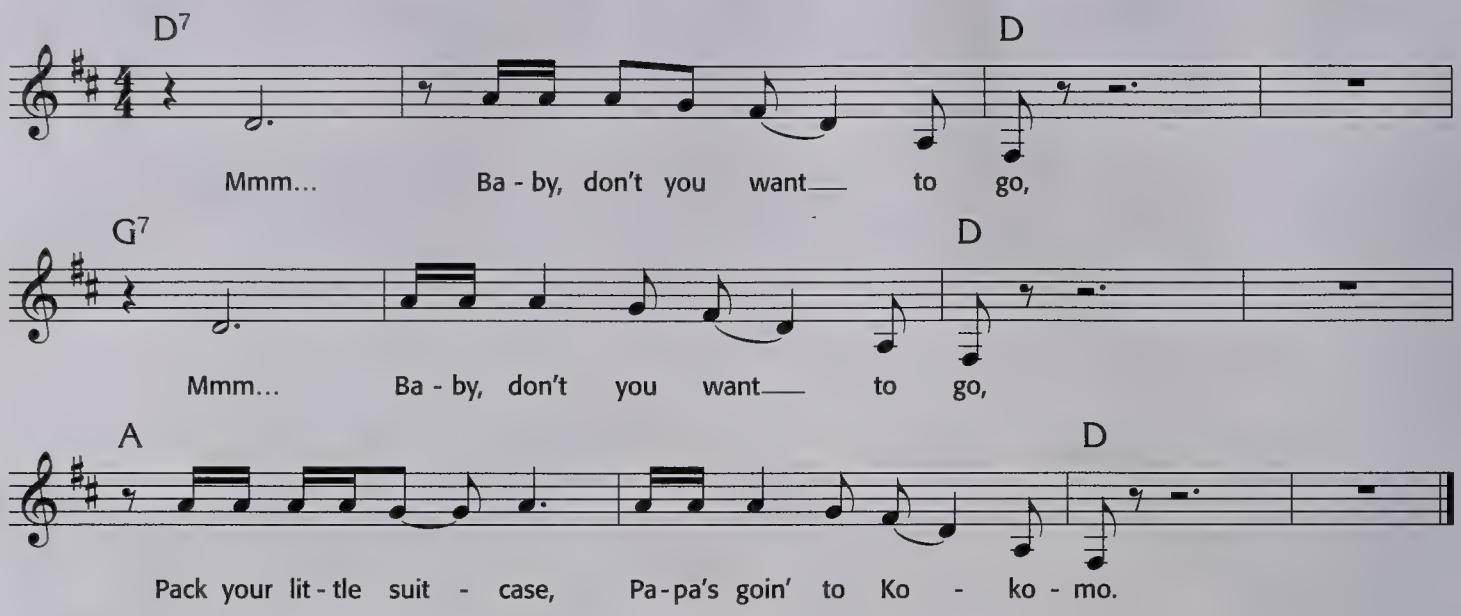
D
G7
D
A
D

D7
ALT. VERSE
D
G7


D
A7
G7
D

# Kokomo Blues

## Lead Sheet




1. Mmm, baby, don't you want to go,
   Mmm, baby, don't you want to go,
   Pack your little suitcase, Papa's goin' to Kokomo.

2. Mmm, baby, where you been so long,
   Mmm, baby, where you been so long,
   I can tell mama something goin' on wrong.

3. Mmm, baby, you don't know, you don't know,
   Mmm, baby, you don't know, you don't know,
   Papa's all ready, goin' back to Kokomo.

4. And me and my baby had a falling out last night,
   And me and my baby had a falling out last night,
   Somehow ain't nothing, my babe won't treat me right.

5. Mmm, baby, what's the matter now,
   Mmm, baby, what's the matter now,
   Tryin' to quit your daddy, baby, but you don't know how.

6. And I'll sing this verse, baby, I can't sing no more,
   I'll sing this verse, baby, I can't sing no more,
   My train is ready and I'm goin' to Kokomo.

Cordially Yours
Blind Blake

# Blind Blake

During the mid 1920s, the unexpectedly strong sales of Papa Charlie Jackson and Blind Lemon Jefferson records led Paramount Records to sign Blind Blake, a swinging, sophisticated guitarist whose warm, relaxed voice was a far cry from harsh country blues. Some of Blake's lyrics cast him as swinging jazzman or jivey hipster, while others walked the long, lonely road to the gallows. During his own lifetime he was billed as "The Man With the Famous Piano-Sounding Guitar," due to his fast, facile fingerpicking and mastery of ragtime syncopation.

"Lord have mercy, was he sophisticated!" says Jorma Kaukonen, whose covers with Hot Tuna helped introduce Blake's guitar style to rock audiences during the 1970s. "He would have been sophisticated in any era. I really like the completeness of his piano-style playing, his left- and right-hand moves. He could play a complete band arrangement by himself. That appealed to the lone-wolf mentality that I aspired to when I was learning his songs. Later on, it gave me depth for playing double-guitar and piano-guitar stuff with other people. It taught me a lot about putting music together."

Outside of his music, not much is known of Blind Blake. A Paramount promo booklet listed Jacksonville, Florida, as his birthplace, and on one of his records Blake states that his real name is "Arthur Blake." He launched his recording career during the summer of 1926, playing outstanding solo guitar behind Leola B. Wilson's lazy vaudeville blues. A month later, Paramount cast him as a solo artist, and during the next four years, Blake recorded dozens of 78s, including the classic ragtime blues "Diddie Wa Diddie," "Police Dog Blues," "Guitar Chimes," "Georgia Bound," and "Blind Arthur's Breakdown."

His astounding finesse—evident in his speed, rhythmic dexterity, and especially in his use of his right-hand thumb to create sophisticated syncopations—influenced other blues guitarists, notably William Moore and Blind Gary Davis, who spoke of Blake's "sportin' right hand." "I suspect Blind Blake was a three-finger picker," offers Kaukonen, "and I have a sneaking suspicion he wore picks, because he had such a snappy, percussive sound and he's not popping the strings the way bare-finger players do. His favorite keys were C, G, and E, although I'm pretty sure he could play in any of them if he wanted to."

During his heyday, Blake worked as both a solo artist and session guitarist, occasionally stepping out on kazoo or stride piano. A few of his 78s featured stellar backup, notably Gus Cannon on banjo, Jimmy Bertrand on xylophone, and Johnny Dodds on clarinet. Although Blind Blake was earning up to $50 per Paramount side, Little Brother Montgomery claimed that the guitarist's regular source of income during the late 1920s came from playing South Side Chicago house rent parties. Blake, reportedly a heavy drinker, began losing some of his sheen on his later 78s, especially the handful recorded in the early 1930s. After Paramount folded in 1932, Blake never recorded again. Blind Gary Davis claimed Blake was killed by a streetcar; others speculated he returned to Jacksonville. Blind Blake may have vanished into obscurity, but he's still considered the unsurpassed master of ragtime blues guitar.

Blind Blake was at the height of his powers on August 17, 1929, at what was to be his last great session. During the course of that Saturday, he recorded several of his most enduring songs: "Hastings St. (Hastings St. Boogy)," "Diddie Wa Diddie," "Too Tight Blues," "Chump Man Blues," "Police Dog Blues," and "Georgia Bound." While some of these songs were played in the bluesier keys of D and E, Blake relied on his favorite ragtime tuning, C, for "Georgia Bound."

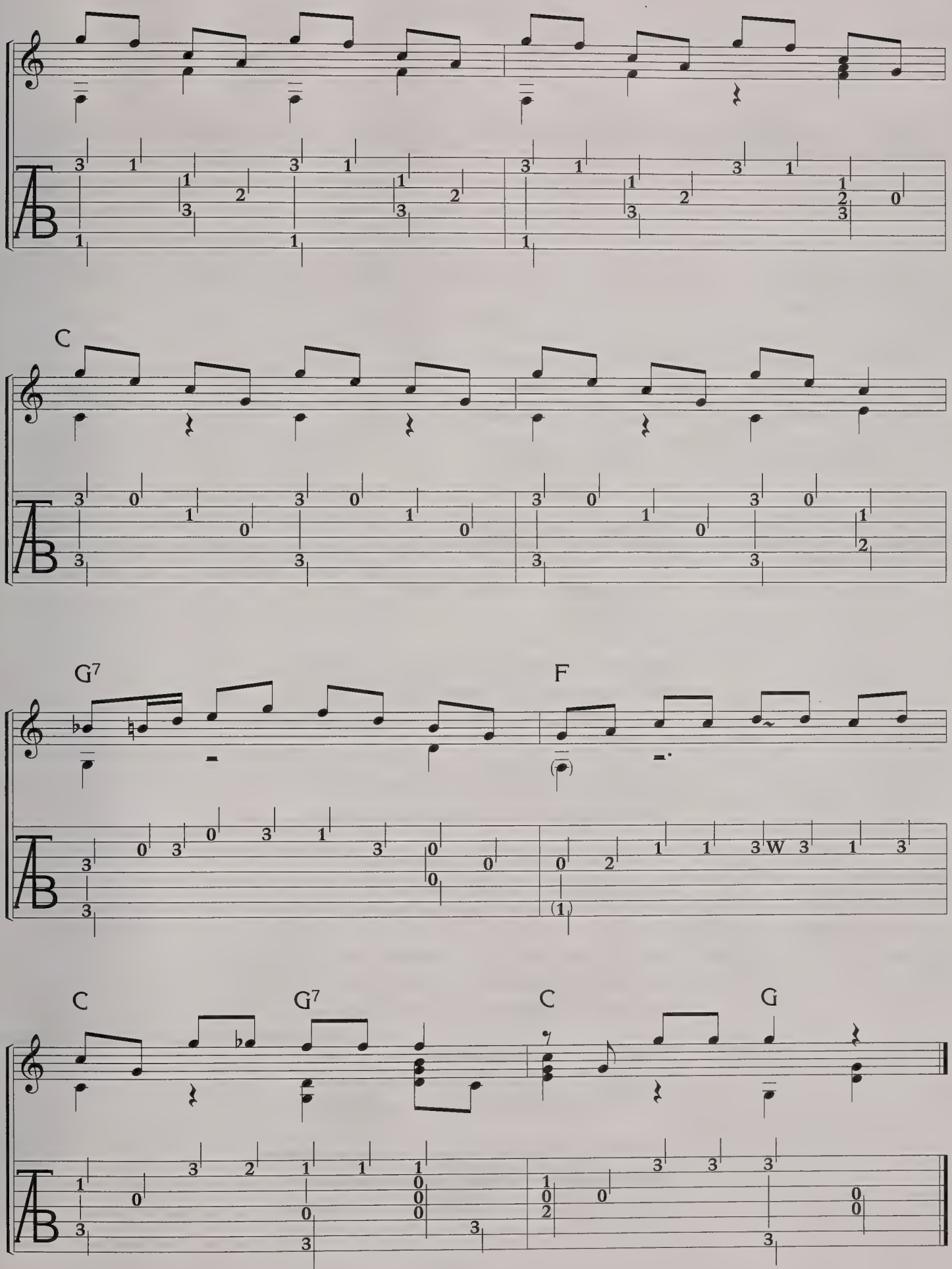
# Georgia Bound

as performed by Blind Blake

F
C
G7
F
C
G7
C

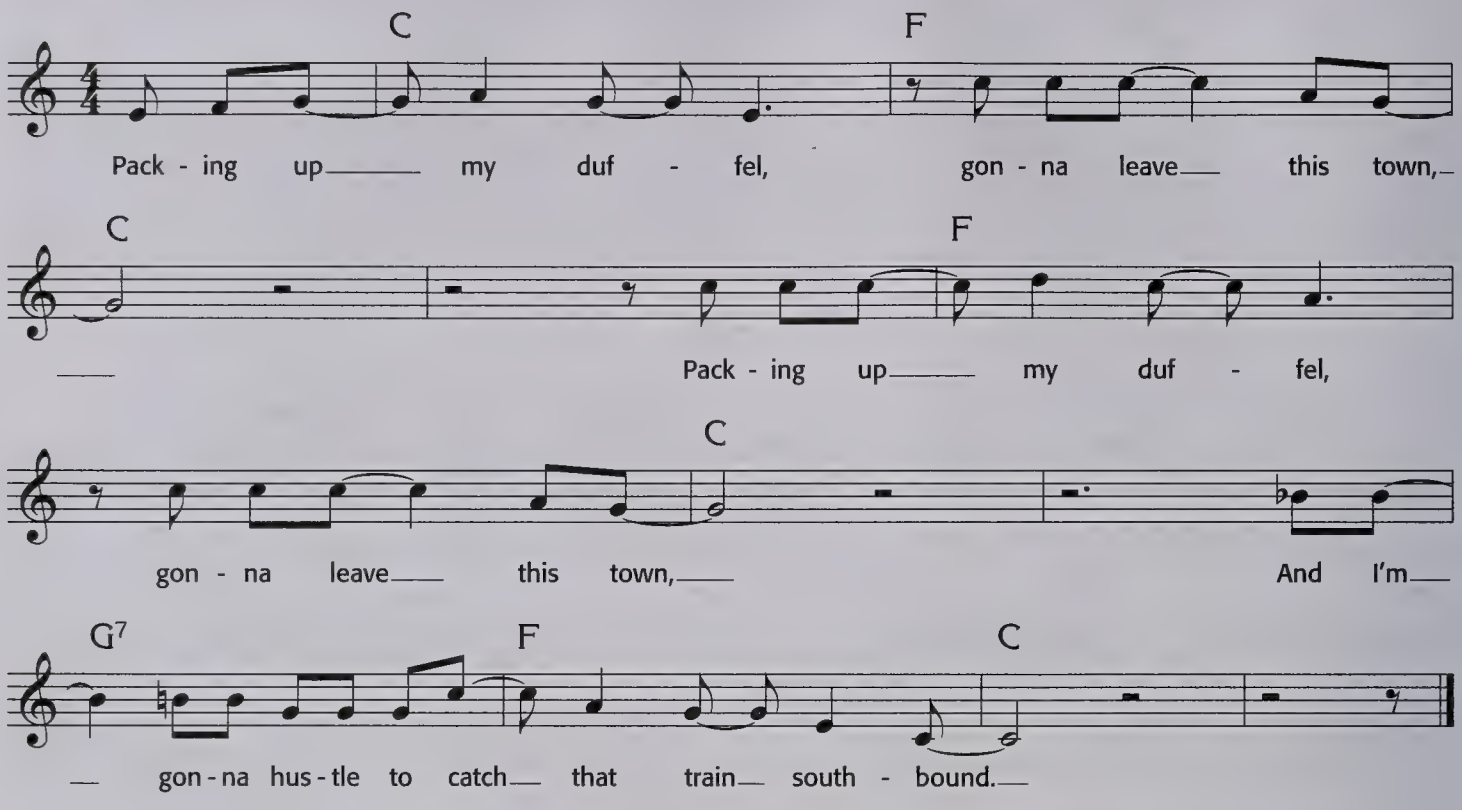
C
F
BREAK 1
C
G7
C7
F
C
G7
C

G7
F
C
G7
C
C
Vibrato
BREAK 2
F


C
G7
F
C
G7
C
G

# Georgia Bound

## Lead Sheet


C
F
Pack - ing up my duf - fel, gon - na leave this town,
C
F
Pack - ing up my duf - fel,
C
gon - na leave this town, And I'm
G7
F
C
gon - na hus - tle to catch that train south - bound.

1. Packing up my duffel, gonna leave this town,
   Packing up my duffel, gonna leave this town,
   And I'm gonna hustle to catch that train southbound.

2. I got the Georgia blues for the plow and hoe,
   I got the Georgia blues for the plow and hoe,
   Walked out my shoes over this ice and snow.

3. Tune up the fiddle, dust off the bow,
   Tune up the fiddle, dust off the bow,
   Put on the griddle and open the cabin door.

4. I thought I was goin' to the north land to stay,
   I thought I was goin' to the north land to stay,
   South is on my mind, my blues won't go away.

5. Potatoes in the ashes, possum on the stove,
   Potatoes in the ashes, possum on the stove,
   You can have the hash but leave it on the clove.

6. Chicken on the roof, babe, watermelons on the vine,
   Chicken on the roof, babe, watermelons on the vine,
   I'll be glad to get back to that Georgia gal of mine.

# Big Bill Broonzy

There's no denying the entrepreneurial shrewdness of this man who, while touring Europe in the early 1950s, led his admirers there to believe that he was the last living American bluesman. By the time anyone got wise, Broonzy's influence was already incalculable, especially in Britain. Ask any of the creative guitarists who emerged there in the 1960s, be they folkies like Martin Carthy or rockers like Keith Richards, and all will point to Broonzy as an early formative influence. Eric Clapton acknowledged this on his 1992 *Unplugged* album with a fine and faithful rendition of Broonzy's "Hey, Hey."

If we look back a half century or more, we don't have to go abroad to measure Broonzy's stature. He was among the bestselling "race" records artists of the 1930s, and few of the male blues singer-guitarists of his era rivaled his popularity. When John Hammond presented his second Spirituals to swing concert at Carnegie Hall in 1939, he wanted Robert Johnson to represent country blues, but hired Broonzy in lieu of the murdered Johnson. Hammond was happy with his substitution, as he recalled in his autobiography, *John Hammond on Record* (Summit Books): "Bill, who farmed in Arkansas with a pair of mules, shuffled out and sang about a dream he'd had in which he sat in President Roosevelt's chair in the White House. The audience screamed. I had never heard anything like this."

Broonzy's shuffling plowboy ruse expressed his knack for sensing what any audience wanted and then delivering the goods. William Lee Conley Broonzy was Mississippi born and raised in Arkansas, but by the time of his Carnegie Hall debut had spent much of the previous twenty years in Chicago, where he was one of the kingpins of the Windy City's pre-War blues scene. He was more sophisticated than he may have let on to the uptown New Yorkers. The barrelhouse swing he had already recorded with the Memphis Five, a group which included trumpet and alto sax, can be heard today as an early blueprint for 1940s "jump" blues. Broonzy's sophistication appeared in his lyrics, especially in the bittersweet humor of "Just a Dream" and "Looking Up at Down." They were the work of a cleverly self-conscious artist.

Broonzy managed to "countrify" urban blues in a way which clearly anticipated the direction Chicago blues took after World War II. Rather than feel threatened by the Young Turks on his turf, Broonzy was a generous champion of the best of them, particularly Muddy Waters. He opened doors for Waters in Chicago's club scene, and, by example, onto the white audience which discovered Waters after Broonzy's death.

Though Broonzy played the country bluesman for a white folk audience in his last years, he had first been one of black America's favorite blues poets. He adapted his music to changing times and audiences without really compromising his integrity or his wry world-view. Broonzy's prolific recorded legacy (he was on both the legendary blues label of the 1920s, Paramount, and on that of the 1950s, Chess) presents a rich variety of guitar styles, from the bouncy ragtime of his 1930 Famous Hokum Boys days to the loping country blues style (characterized by a damped monotonic bass) which was later widely imitated. Along with his fingerstyle virtuosity, Broonzy was also a brisk flatpicker. His range and resources as a guitarist are all the more remarkable if, as claimed, Broonzy did not take up the instrument until he was at least in his mid-twenties. He left a legacy which, in terms of extent and influence, has few equals, *Big Bill's Blues,* written with Yannick Bruynoghe in 1955, is Broonzy's autobiography, a rarity (outside of song) among bluesmen.

# Big Bill Blues

by Big Bill Broonzy

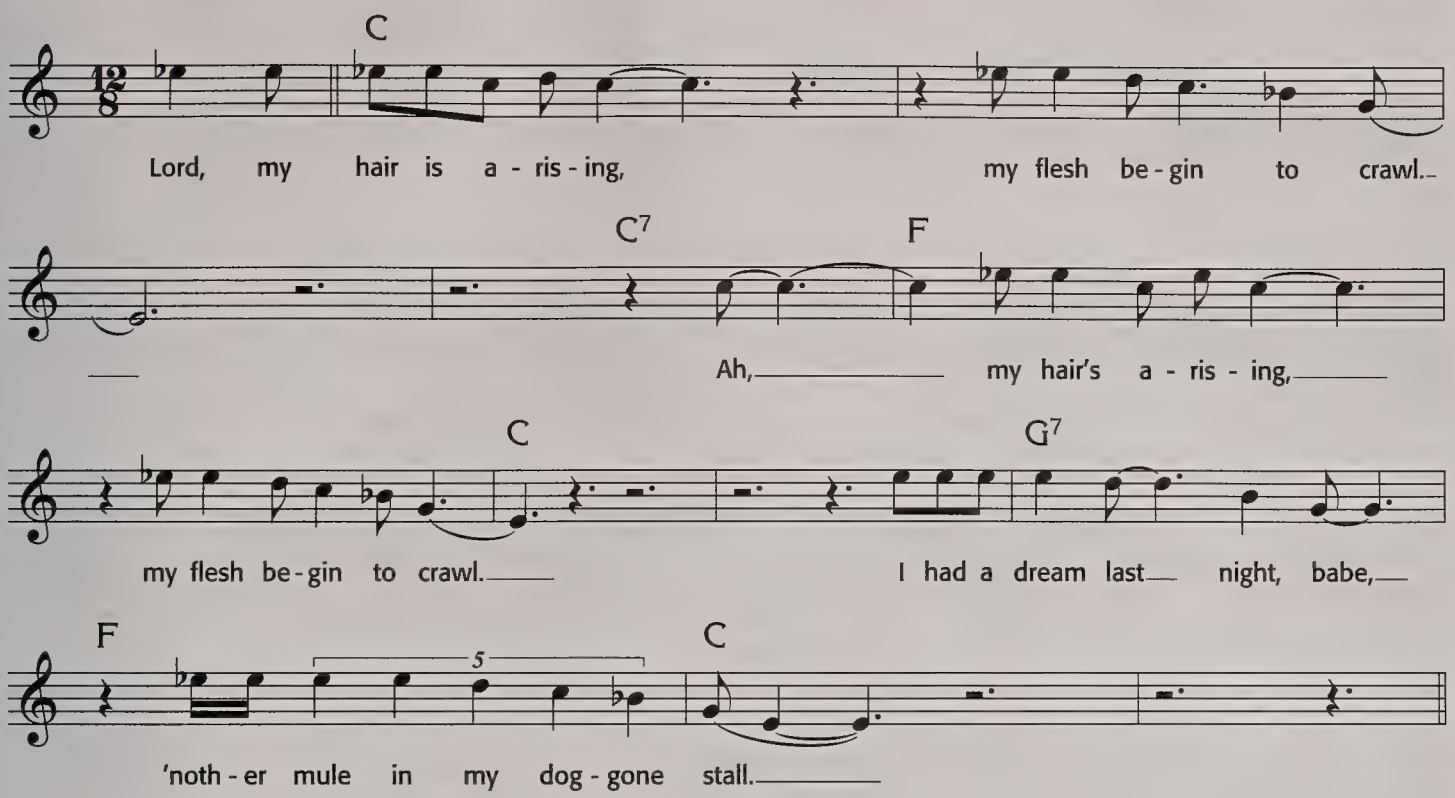
Standard Tuning

(G)
C
to 1st Verse
(C)
GUITAR BREAK
C7

F
C
G
C
to 3rd Verse

# Big Bill Blues

## Lead Sheet


C
Lord, my hair is a - ris - ing, my flesh be - gin to crawl.
C7
F
Ah, my hair's a - ris - ing,
C
G7
my flesh be - gin to crawl. I had a dream last night, babe,
F
5
C
'noth - er mule in my dog - gone stall.

1. Lord, my hair is a-rising, my flesh begin to crawl.
   Ah, my hair is a-rising, my flesh begin to crawl.
   I had a dream last night babe, another mule in my doggone stall.

2. And it's some people said these, Big Bill blues ain't bad,
   Now, some people said these, Big Bill blues ain't bad.
   Lord, it must not have been them, Big Bill blues they had.

3. Lord, I wonder what's the matter, papa Bill can't get no mail.
   Lord, wonder what's the matter now, papa Bill can't get no mail.
   Lord, the post office must be on fire, and the mailman must undoubtedly be in jail.

4. I can't be a wagon, since you ain't going to be a mule.
   Mmm, can't be your wagon mama, since you ain't going to be a mule.
   I ain't going fix up your black plantation, I ain't going be your doggone fool.

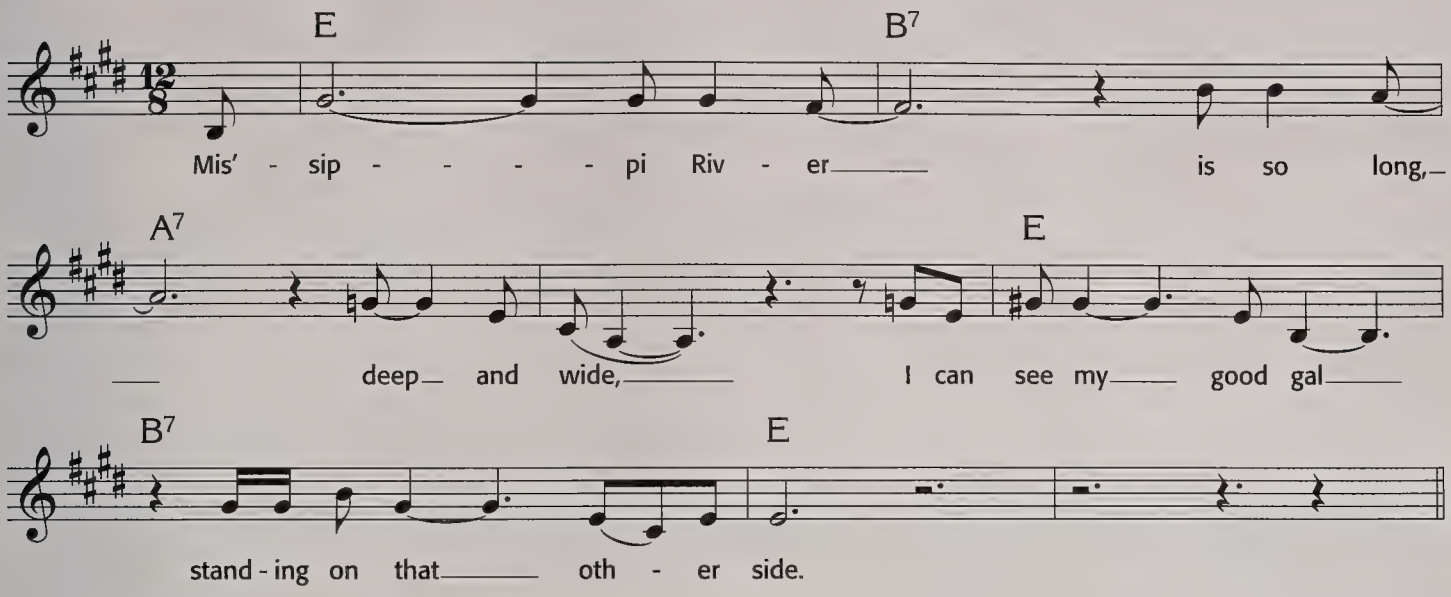
# Mississippi River Blues

by Big Bill Broonzy

Standard Tuning, capo 3

# Mississippi River Blues

## Lead Sheet




1. Mississippi River is so long, deep and wide.
   I can see my good gal, standing on that other side.

2. I cried and I called, I could not make my baby hear.
   Lord, I'm going to get me a boat, woman, paddle on away from here.

3. Ain't it hard to love someone, when they are so far from you.
   Lord, I'm going to get me a boat and pass this old river blue.

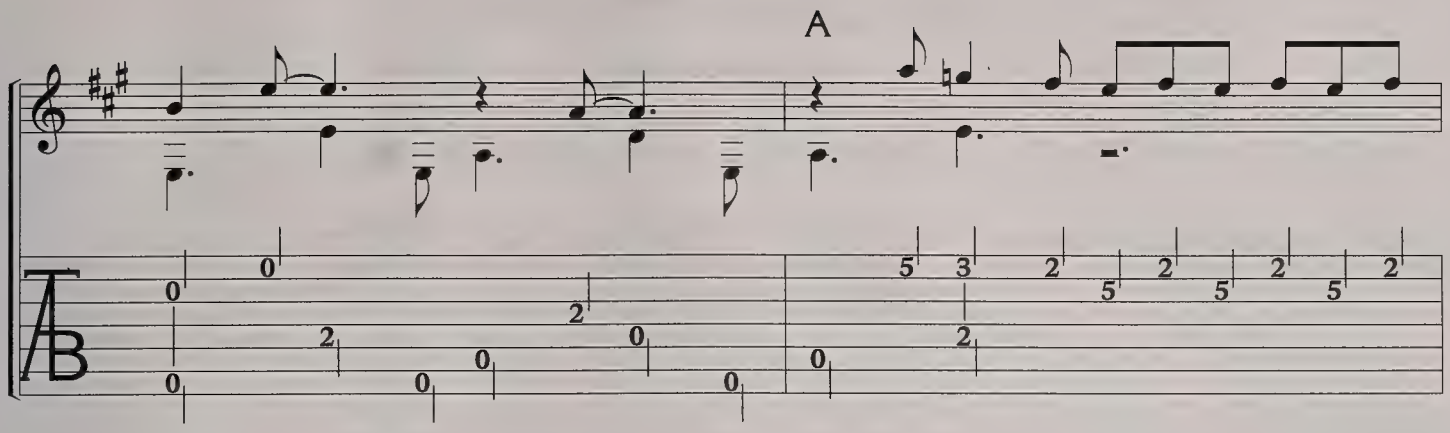
4. I went down to the landing, to see if any boat was there.
   And the ferryman told me, could not find a boat no where.

5. The big boat is up the river, oh, turning 'round and 'round.
   Lord, I'm going to get me a good girl, or jump overboard and drown.

# Mr. Conductor Man

by Big Bill Broonzy

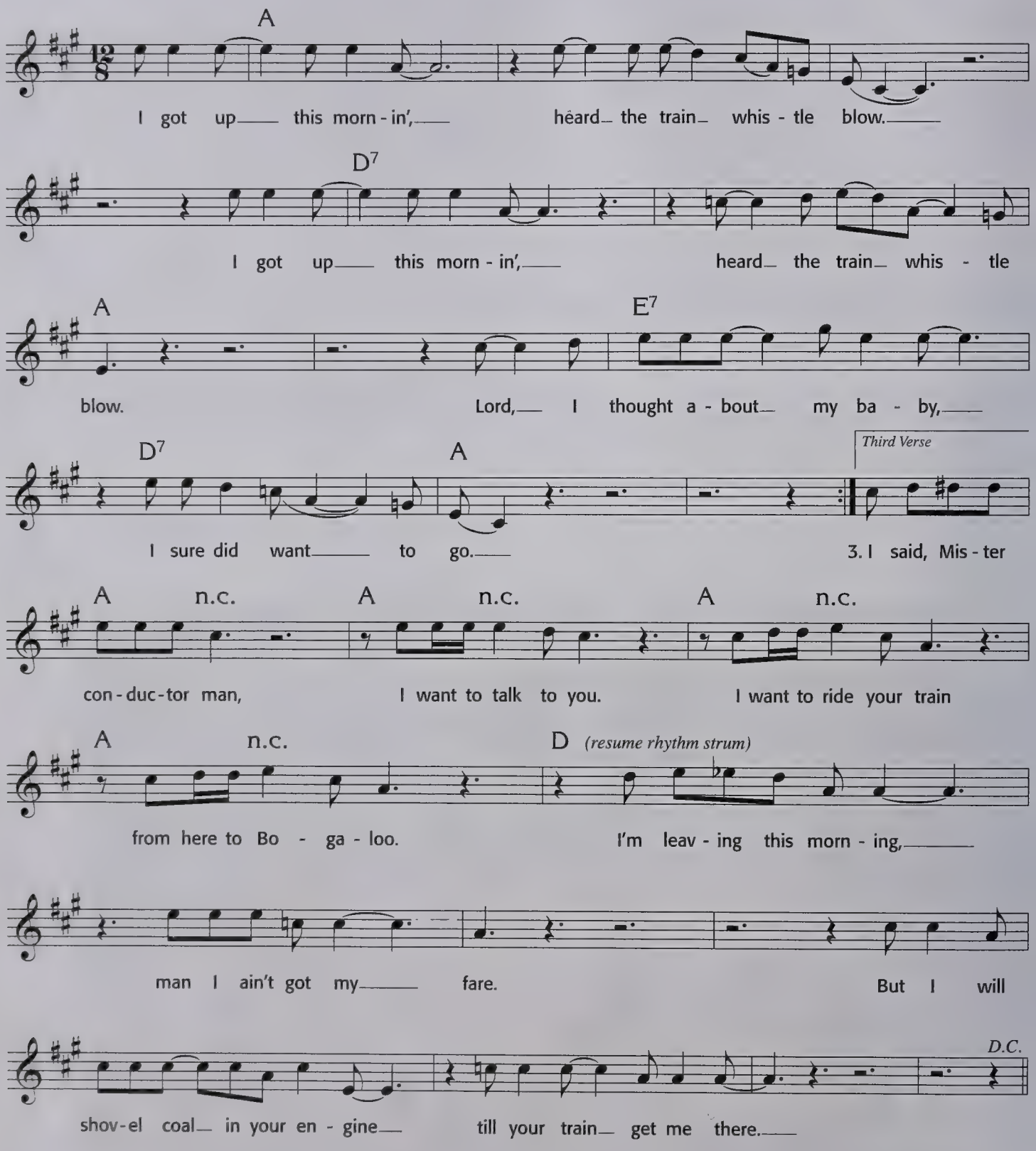
Standard Tuning, Capo 1



*Big Bill Broonzy, 1954 at Circle Pines Center*
*Photo by John Glass*

# Mr. Conductor Man

## Lead Sheet


A
I got up this morn - in', heard the train whis - tle blow.
D7
I got up this morn - in', heard the train whis - tle
A
blow.
E7
Lord, I thought a - bout my ba - by,
D7
A
Third Verse
I sure did want to go.
3. I said, Mis - ter
A n.c.
A n.c.
A n.c.
con - duc - tor man, I want to talk to you. I want to ride your train
A n.c.
D (resume rhythm strum)
from here to Bo - ga - loo. I'm leav - ing this morn - ing,
man I ain't got my fare. But I will
D.C.
shov - el coal in your en - gine till your train get me there.

1. I got up this morning, heard the train whistle blow.
   I got up this morning, heard the train whistle blow.
   Lord, I thought about my baby, I sure did want to go.

2. Lord, I grabbed up my suitcase, I run to the old depot.
   Babe, I grabbed up my suitcase, I run to the old depot.
   I could see the conductor, he waving his hand to go.

3. I said, "Mister conductor man, I want to talk to you.
   I want to ride your train from here to Bogaloo."
   I'm leaving this morning, man I ain't got my fare.
   But I will shovel coal in your engine, 'til your train get me there.

4. Fine, please Mister conductor man, oh, take my last thin dime.
   Fine, please Mister conductor man, please take my last thin dime.
   Lord, I got a woman in Bogaloo waiting, man I can't loose no time.

5. The bell started ringing, conductor hollered all aboard.
   When the bell started ringing, conductor hollered all aboard.
   Lord, I picked up my suitcase, start walking down the road.

6. I'm leaving this morning, I sure don't want to go.
   I'm leaving this morning, I sure don't want to go.
   Lord, and the woman I've been loving, she don't want me no more.

*Big Bill Broonzy, 1955 at Circle Pines Center*
*Photo by Peter Weil*

# Saturday Night Rub

as performed by Big Bill Broonzy

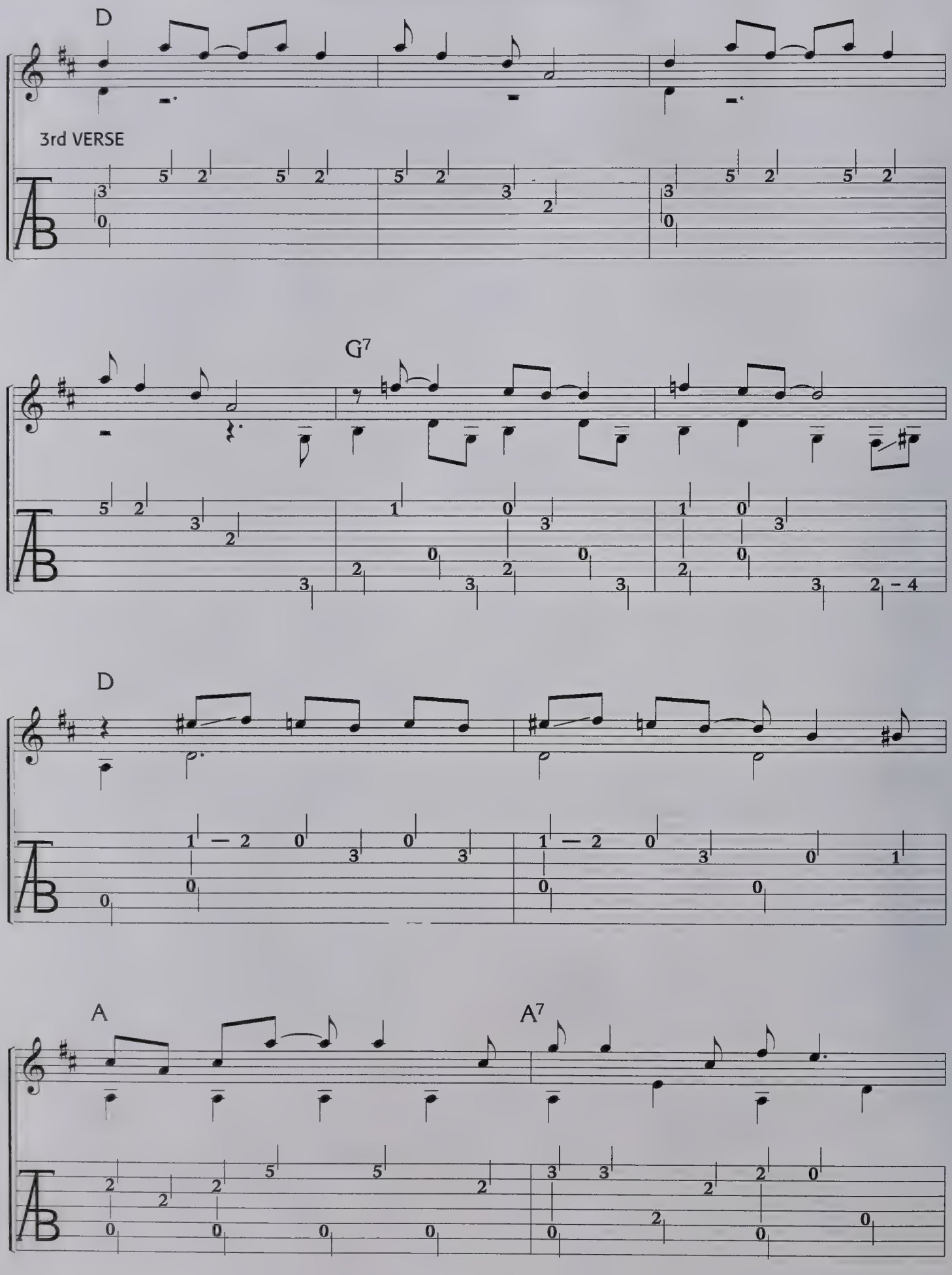
D7
G
D7
G
(C)
(G
D7
G

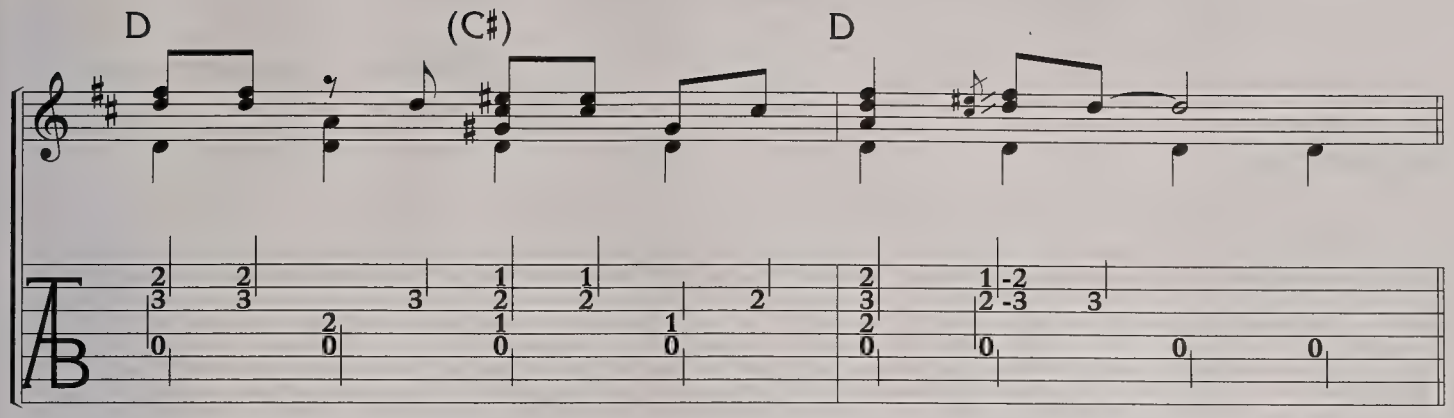
*Big Bill Broonzy*

# Stove Pipe Stomp

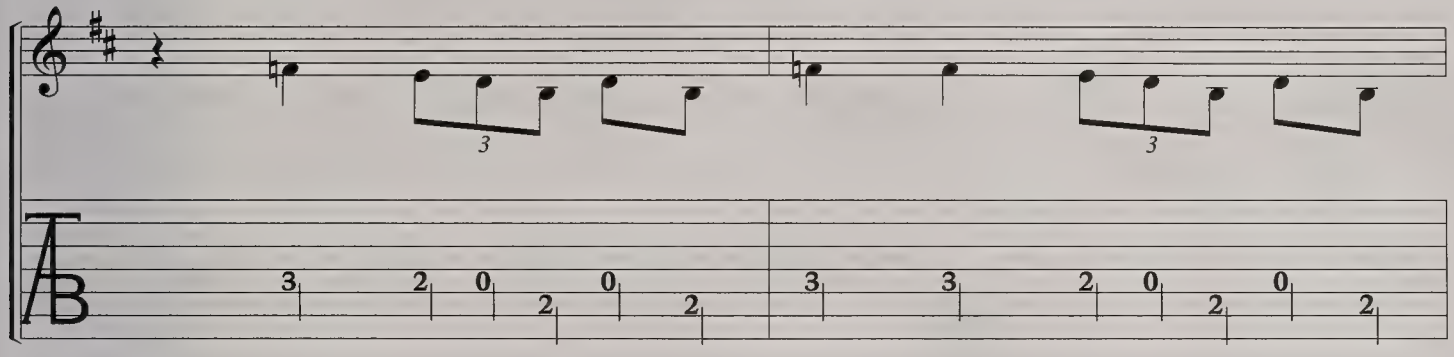
as performed by Big Bill Broonzy

Standard Tuning


D
3rd VERSE
G7
D
A
A7



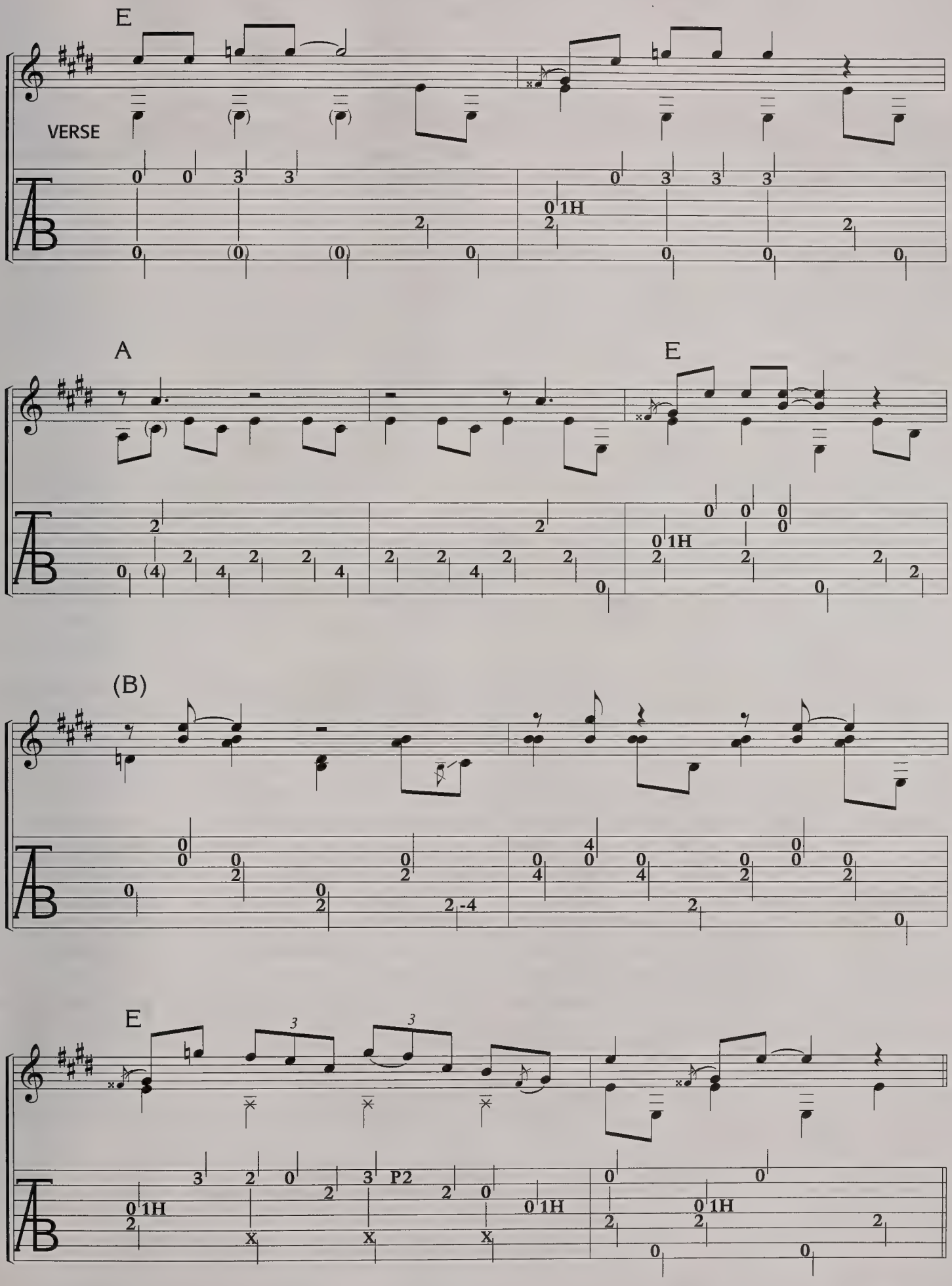

(D7) VARIATION for BARS 1–4 of VERSE



# Worryin' You Off My Mind

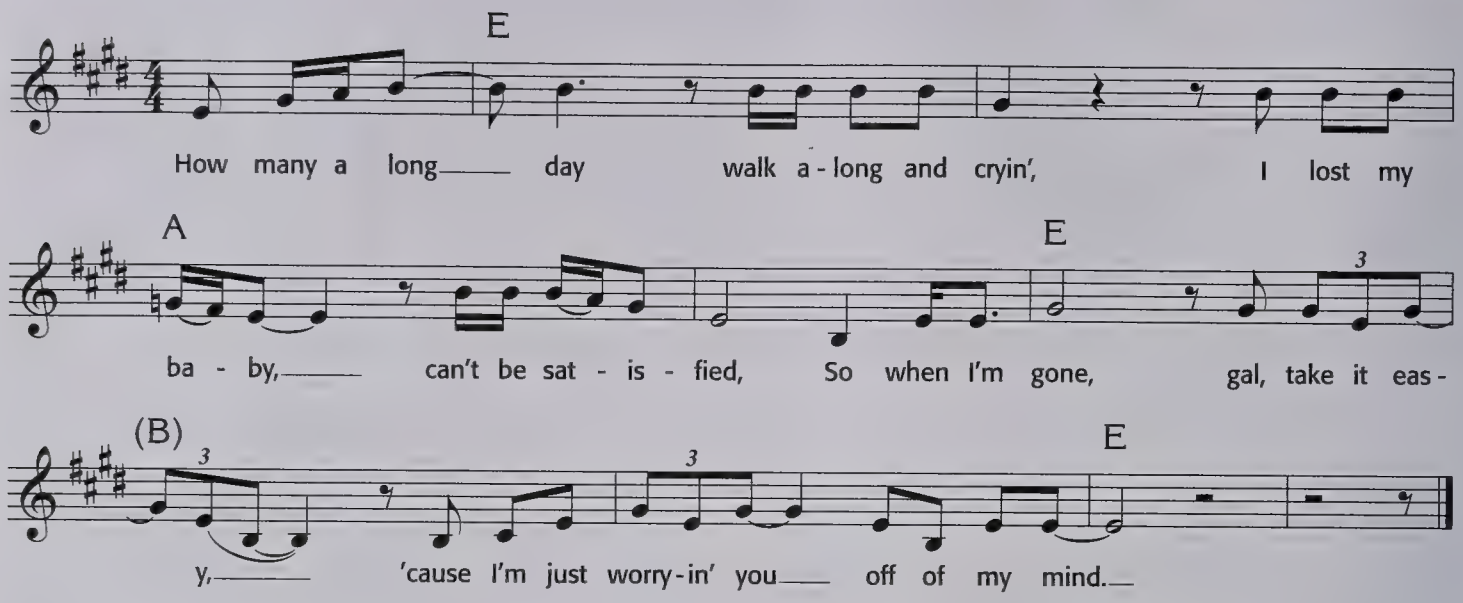
as performed by Big Bill Broonzy

Standard Tuning


E
VERSE
A
E
(B)
E
P2

# Worryin' You Off My Mind

## Lead Sheet


E
How many a long day walk a - long and cryin', I lost my
A
E
ba - by, can't be sat - is - fied, So when I'm gone, gal, take it eas -
(B)
E
y, 'cause I'm just worry - in' you off of my mind.

1. How many a long day walk along and cryin',
   I lost my baby, can't be satisfied,
   So when I'm gone — gal, take it easy,
   'Cause I'm just worryin' you off of my mind.

2. When you get in trouble, haven't got a friend,
   Just take it easy, they'll need your help again.
   So when I'm gone — gal take it easy,
   'Cause I'm just worryin' you off of my mind.

3. Now ain't it hard to live alone,
   Just (as) hard to be married, and break up your home.
   So when I'm gone — gal take it easy,
   'Cause I'm just worryin' you off of my mind.

4. But that alright, that's alright for you,
   You need me some mornin', when I won't need you.
   So when I'm gone — gal take it easy,
   'Cause I'm just worryin' you off of my mind.

5. When I was down, lost my wife and my friend,
   When I got my money, they all come back again.
   So when I'm gone — gal take it easy,
   I'm just worryin' you off of my mind.

6. But money and pretty women, run hand in hand,
   When they raisin' a squabble, takin' some woman('s) man.
   So when I'm gone — gal take it easy,
   'Cause I'm just worryin' you off of my mind.

# Rev. Gary Davis

***"The first time I ever heard a guitar played I thought it was a brass band coming through. I was a small kid and I asked my mother what it was and she said that was a guitar. I said, 'Ain't you going to get me one of those when I get large enough?'"***

—Rev. Gary Davis, interviewed by Sam Charters in *Rev. Gary Davis: Blues Guitar* by Stefan Grossman (Oak Publications, New York, 1974).

His guitar was Davis's lifelong companion, an alter ego he would often verbally encourage ("talk to me now!") during an inspired solo. Both blues and the parallel sacred song tradition in African-American music were magnets for an extraordinary talent pool of brilliant, blind singer guitarists: Blind Lemon Jefferson, Blind Willie Johnson, Blind Blake, Blind Boy Fuller, Blind Willie Johnson, Blind Blake, Blind Boy Fuller, and Blind Willie McTell are among the best known. They sang variously on streetcorners, in storefront tabernacles, in jukejoints, anywhere a blind singer with a guitar might earn a few coins. Davis was part of that tradition of survival, though artistically he was a tradition unto himself. Fortunately, his distinctive style today has many heirs.

Davis grew up in rural South Carolina at the turn of the century. The guitar players there had an affinity for the piano ragtime which flourished in the late 19th century, and were finding ingenious was to fit this syncopated keyboard music onto guitar. By the time he was 15, Davis's skills were keen enough to play with the legendary Willie Walker in a Greenville string band. (Davis, who passed praised sparingly, remembered Walker as a "master musician...a guitar dog.") After some years of wandering in the Carolinas, Davis settled in Durham, North Carolina in 1931. It was there that he met Blind Boy Fuller, and his first opportunity to record arose. "Blind Gary's" initial discs met with little acclaim, but he had a formidable reputation in Durham, where Fuller reportedly called to his superior musicianship. A welfare case worker who went to observe Davis noted: "His sensibility as a guitarist is unbelievable. I have never heard better playing."

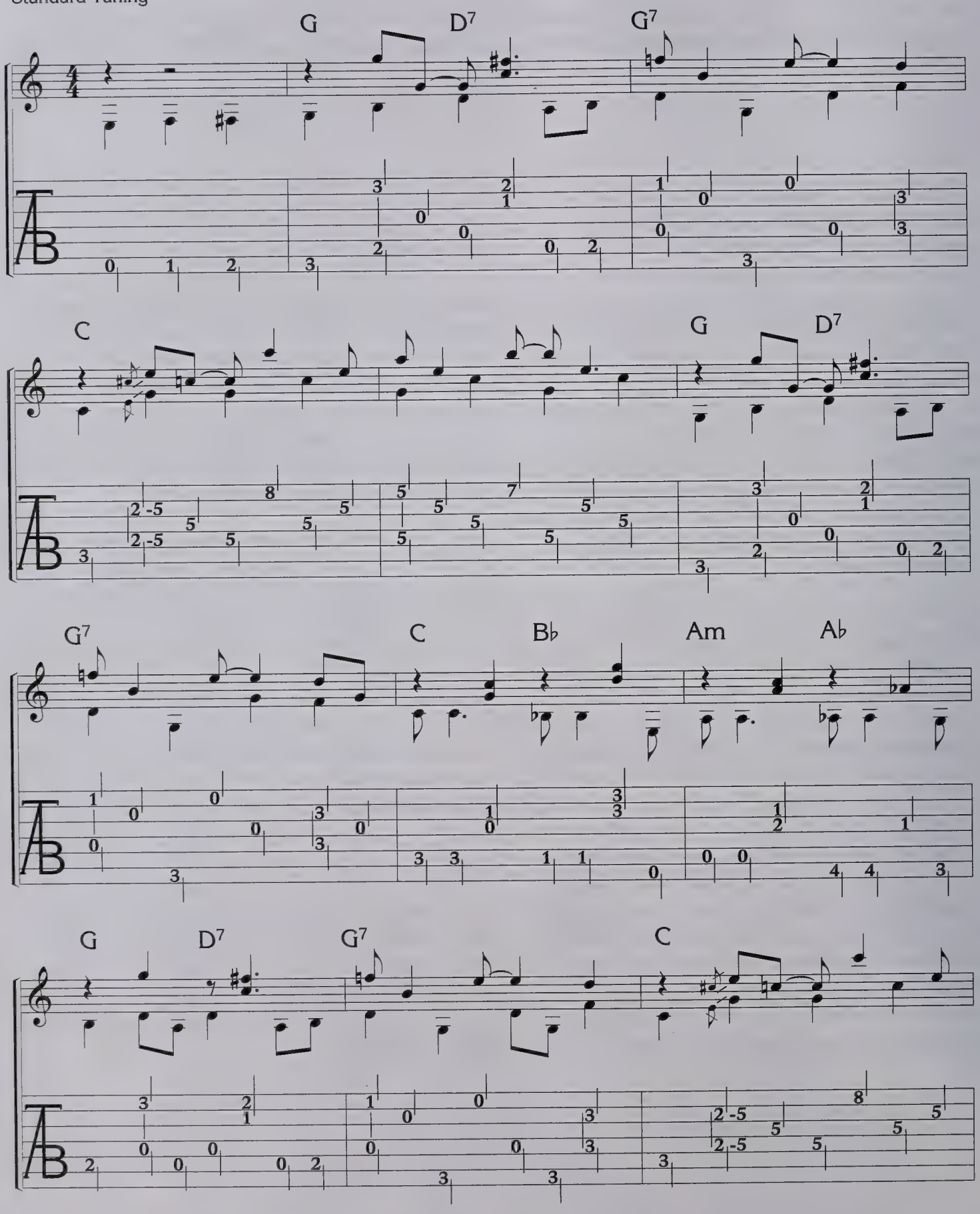
The scene of Davis's playing to New York City in 1944, when his wife, Annie, obtained employment with a family there. The streets were tougher and colder than those of Durham, but Davis, street smart and self-assured, was equal to their test. Moses Asch became aware of Davis some ten years after he arrived in New York, and this extraordinary "street minstrel," as he was touted, was recorded extensively in the later 1950s and throughout the '60s. Peter, Paul & Mary's success with Davis's "If I Had My Own Way (Samson and Delilah)" considerably eased his need to sing on Bronx street corners.

Davis's exposure to the urban folk audience put him in great demand as both a performer and as a teacher. He loved sharing the fine points of his guitar style with anyone who was seriously interested, and the list of guitarists who learned from Davis, either directly or by osmosis, includes Stefan Grossman, David Bromberg, Taj Mahal, Jorma Kaukonen, and Bob Weir. Woody Mann once wrote, "Davis's technique is best described as a cross between the tight discipline involved in the ragtime of Blind Blake and the contrasting formlessness of Blind Lemon Jefferson." As much as they were awed by Davis's music, his students were equally struck by Davis's resourceful spunk. Dave Van Ronk recalled in a *Guitar Extra!* interview Davis telling him about the theft of his guitar on Harlem's streets: "It ain't gonna happen again," Davis informed Van Ronk, and proudly displayed a .38 pistol. "He said, 'I call this pistol Miss Ready,'" Van Ronk recalled. "I said, 'Gee, Gary, I don't want to talk out of turn, but you are blind.' He said, 'That don't matter. If I can hear it, I can shoot it!'"

# Cincinnati Flow Rag

by Rev. Gary Davis

Standard Tuning

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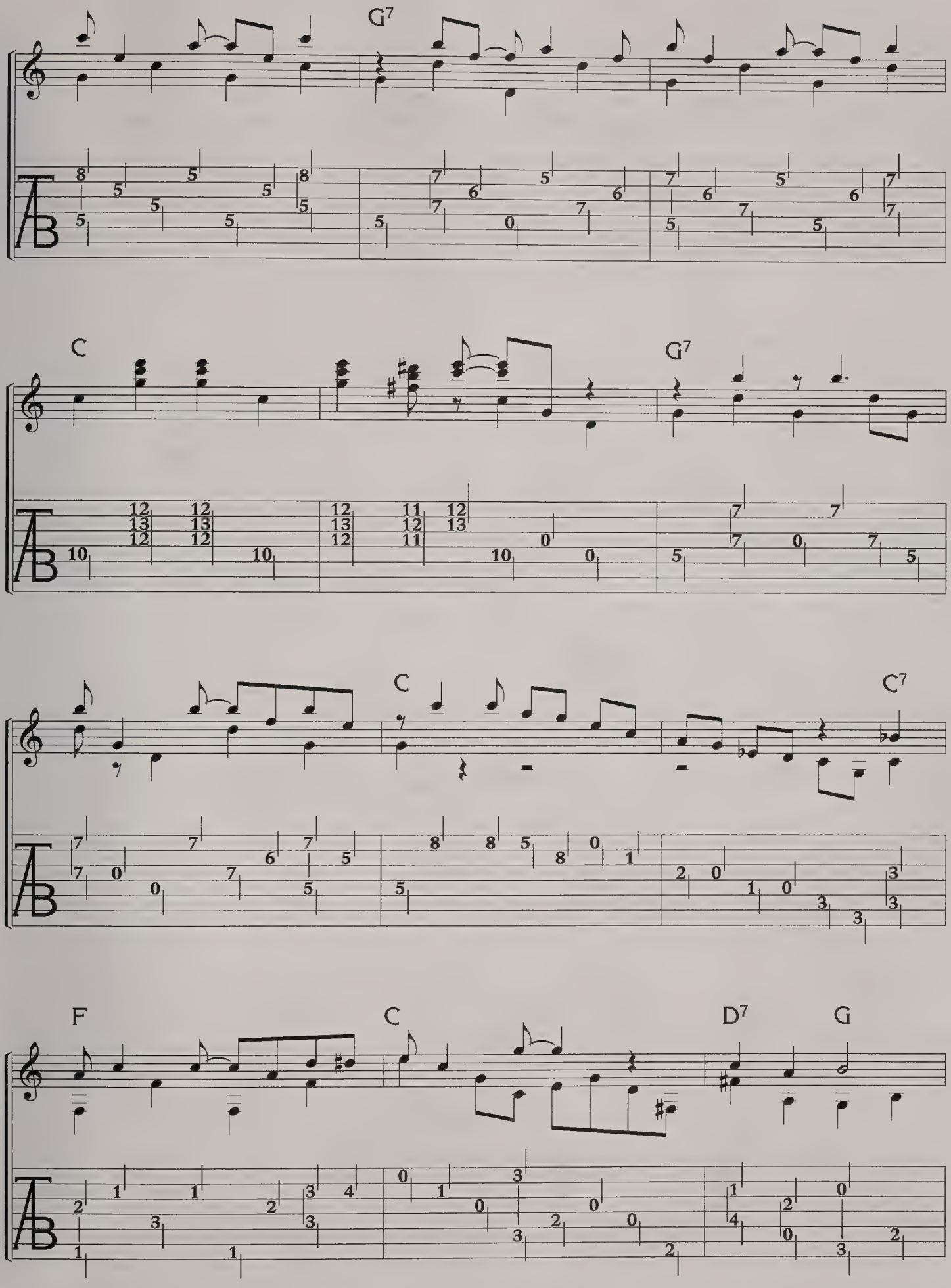
C
A
C
A7
D7
G7
C
G
D7
2nd VERSE
G7
C
G
D7
G7
C
B♭

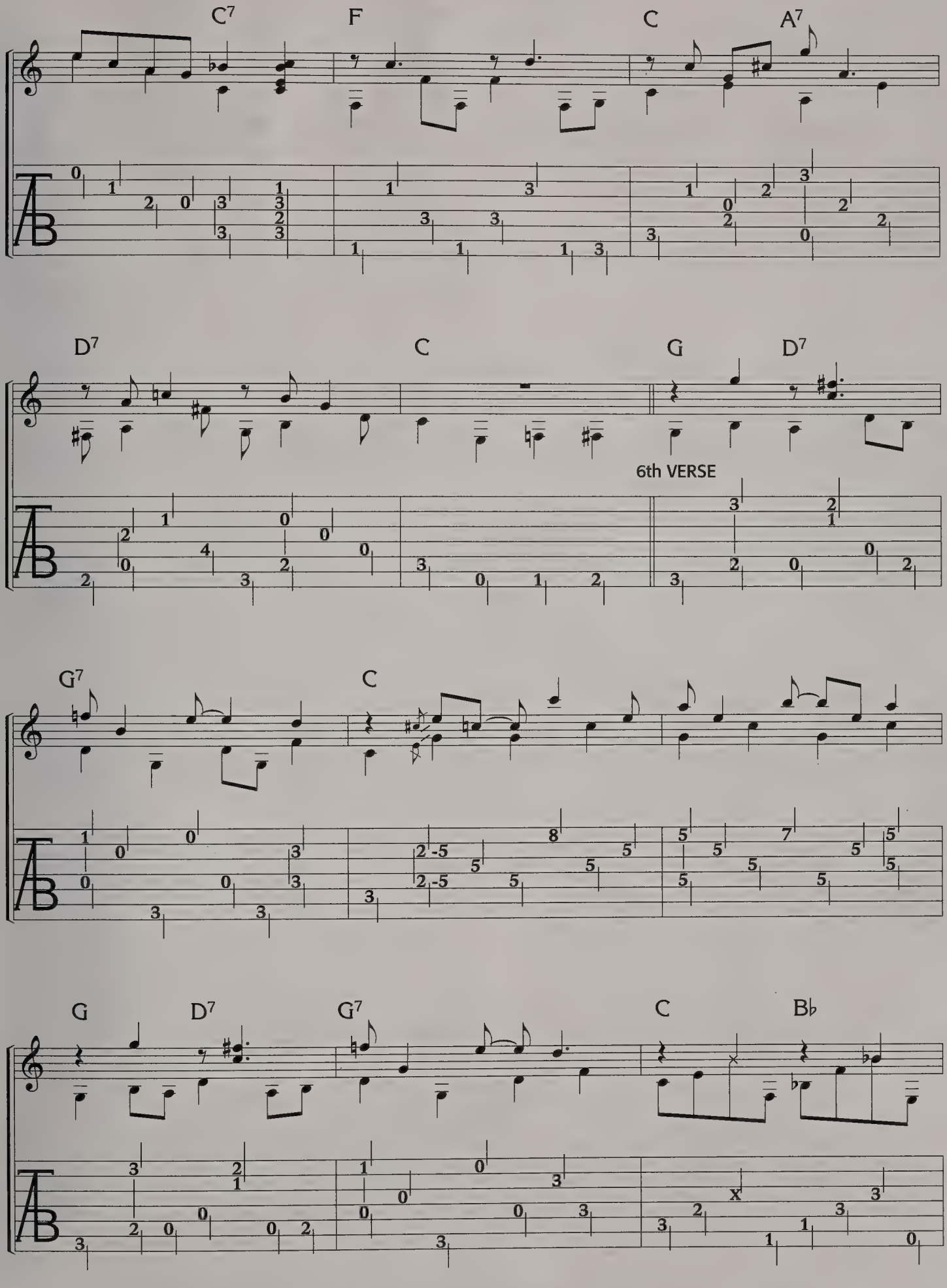
F/A
A♭
G
D7
G7
C
C
A
C
A
D7
G7
C
G7
C
3rd VERSE

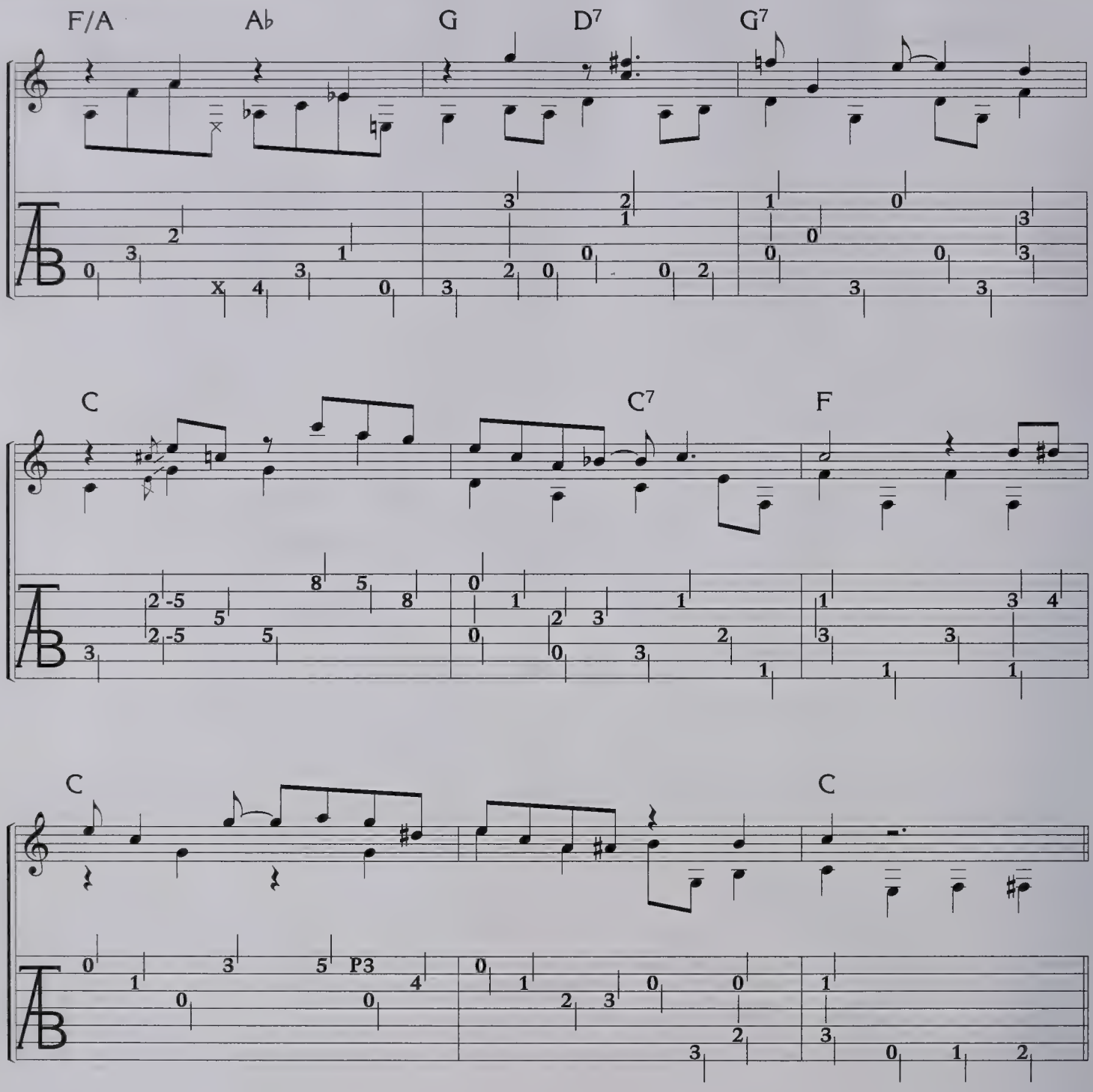

G7
C
G7
C
C7
F
C
D7
G

C
G
D7
G7
4th VERSE
C
G
D7
G7
(C)
G
D7
G7
C

F
C
G
5th VERSE
C
G
C

G
(C)
G
C
G
C


C7
F
C
A7
D7
C
G
D7
6th VERSE
G7
C
G
D7
G7
C
B♭


F/A
Ab
G
D7
G7
C
C7
F
C
C
P3

# Italian Rag

by Rev. Gary Davis

Standard Tuning

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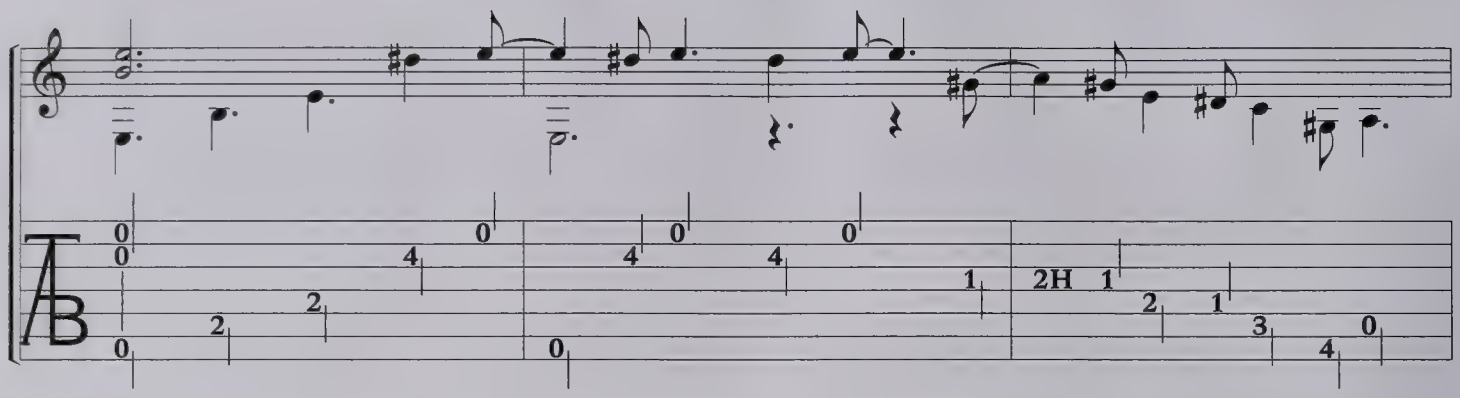

*Rev. Gary Davis*
*Photo by Stefan Grossman*

# Sally, Where'd You Get Your Liquor From

by Rev. Gary Davis

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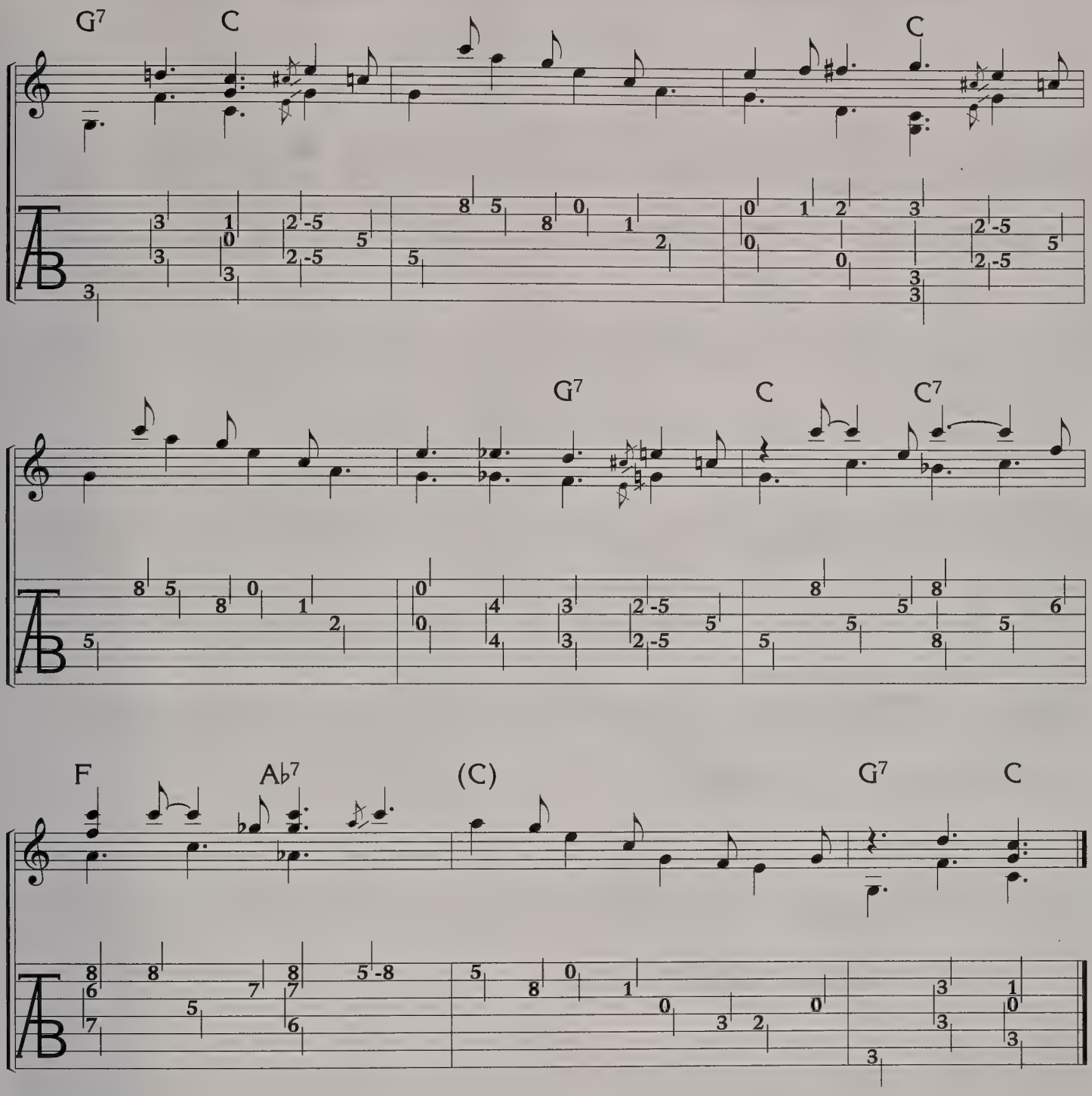
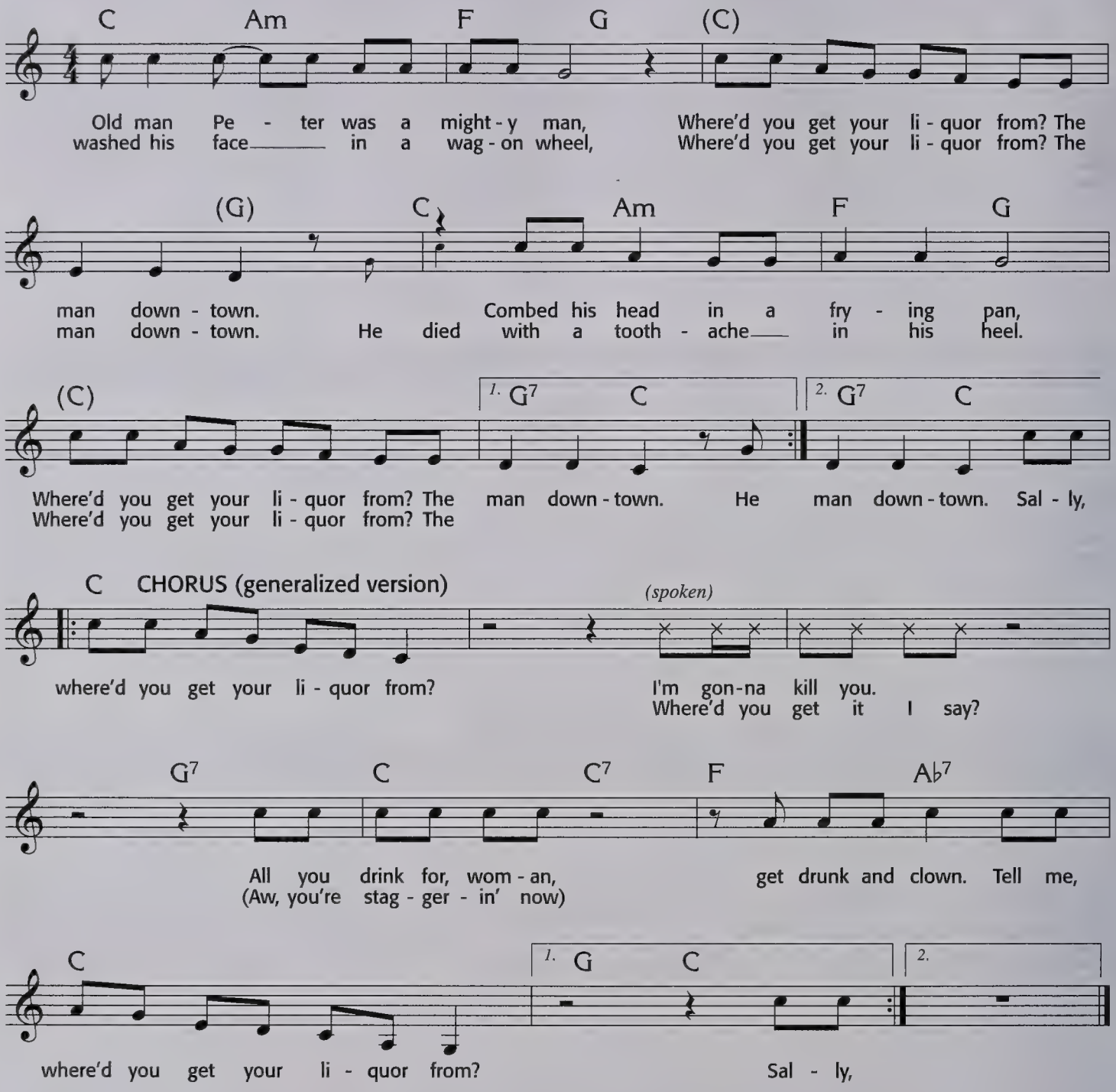
C
Am
G7
C
(C)
CHORUS
C
G7
C
C7
F
Ab7
(C)


G7
C
C
G7
C
C7
F
Ab7
(C)
G7
C

# Sally, Where'd You Get Your Liquor From

## Lead Sheet


C Am F G (C)
Old man Pe - ter was a might - y man, Where'd you get your li - quor from? The
washed his face in a wag - on wheel, Where'd you get your li - quor from? The
(G) C Am F G
man down - town. Combed his head in a fry - ing pan,
man down - town. He died with a tooth - ache in his heel.
(C) 1. G7 C 2. G7 C
Where'd you get your li - quor from? The man down - town. He man down - town. Sal - ly,
Where'd you get your li - quor from? The
C CHORUS (generalized version)
(spoken)
where'd you get your li - quor from? I'm gon-na kill you.
Where'd you get it I say?
G7 C C7 F Ab7
All you drink for, wom - an, get drunk and clown. Tell me,
(Aw, you're stag - ger - in' now)
C 1. G C 2.
where'd you get your li - quor from? Sal - ly,

1. Old man Peter was a mighty man
Where'd you get your liquor from? Man downtown.
Combed his head in a frying pan
Where'd you get your liquor from? Man downtown.
Washed his face in a wagon wheel
Where'd you get your liquor from? Man downtown.
Died with a toothache in his heel
Where'd you get your liquor from? Man downtown.

*Chorus (2x)*
Sally, where'd you get your liquor from? Man downtown.
Sally, where'd you get your liquor from? Man downtown.
All your good for, woman, is to get drunk and clown.
Sally, where'd you get your liquor from? Man downtown.

2. Sally you just ain't no doggone good
I would get rid of you Sally, if I could
The old mule kicked, the old cow pranced
Old sow whistled while the little pig danced. *(Chorus)*

3. I come in one evening about half past four
Sally done got my food and strown it all over the floor
There's one thing Sally I'm just going to do
I'm going to get me a woman treat me better than you. *(Chorus)*

4. Sally went up on the hill with a glass in her hand
Trying to find another drunk so she can come back and raise some more sand. *(Chorus)*

5. You ain't worth the salt that goes in your bread
Ain't worth a pound of lead takes to keep you dead
One of these days I'll tell you what I'm going to do
I'm going to get me another woman to do me right and get rid of you. *(Chorus)*

6. Never seen a bottle like this before
He baptized a bullfrog in '54
I would get your liquor just any old day
These good looking women don't let me pray. *(Chorus)*

7. Old mule and old cow pranced
Old sow whistled while the little pig danced
Bullfrog jumped on the pulpit stand
He preached the gospel like a natural man. *(Chorus)*

# Two Step Canoyman

by Rev. Gary Davis

Standard Tuning

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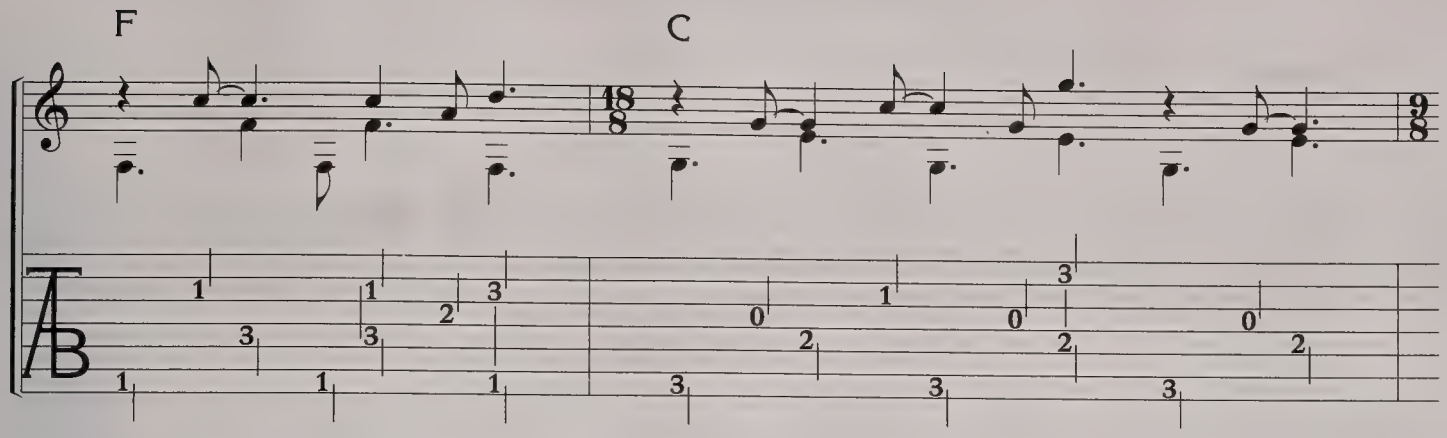


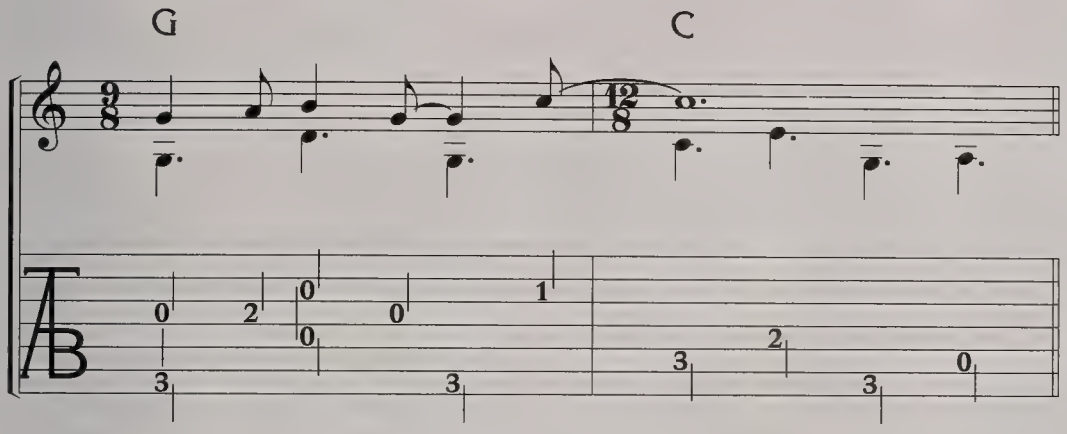


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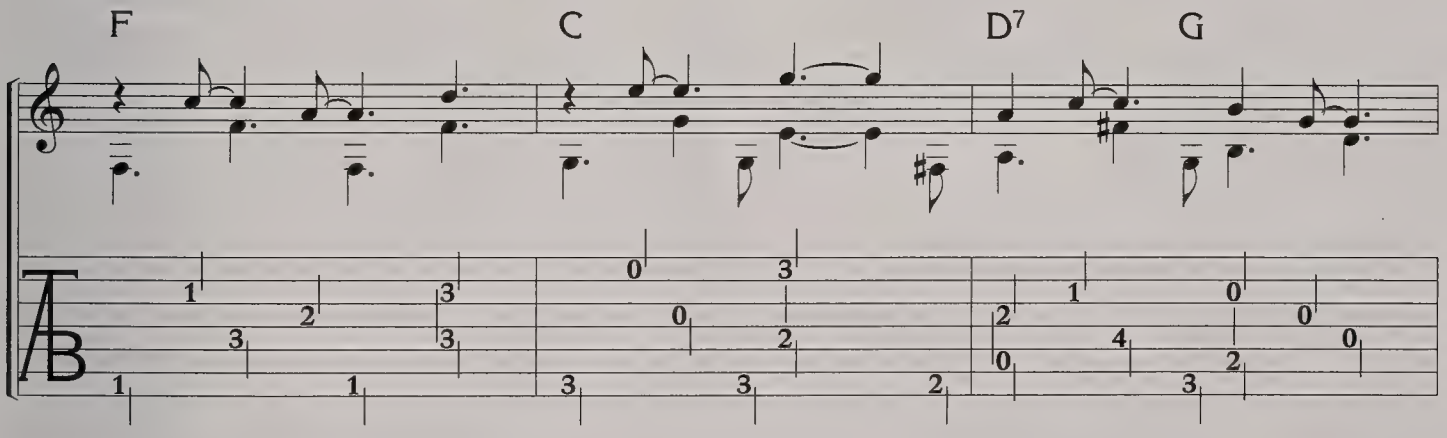
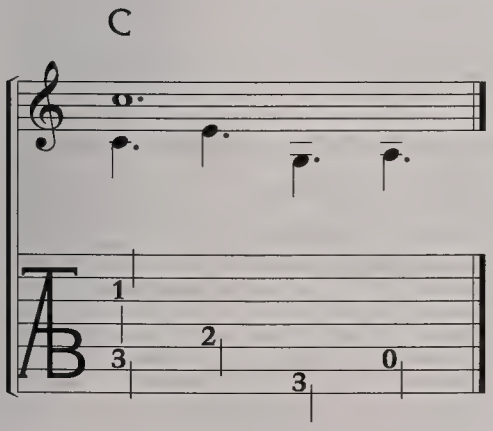


# Blind Lemon Jefferson

***"Lemon...was the kinda blues man you didn't have every day on the street. He was the king. Wherever he pull his guitar out, he was the king there. Wasn't no use in anybody else to come up talkin' about playin' against him, 'cause they couldn't even do what he was doin'—all they could do is look and wonder how in the hell he done it."***

—Texas bluesman Tom Shaw, remembering Blind Lemon Jefferson

Lemon Jefferson's sightless, impassive gaze in his sole surviving photograph suggests a black Texas Buddha. This enigmatic figure was born in the central Texas farm country around Wortham, but had wandered north to Dallas by the mid-1920s, when the commercial boom in blues recording prompted his discovery. His regional fame spread nationwide via over eighty recordings he made between 1926-29. Among musicians, Jefferson's admirers were legion, even if successful imitators of his complex and idiosyncratic style were not. Encounters with Jefferson conferred a mantle of manhood on bluesmen, so Texas singer-guitarists as diverse as Leadbelly, Lightnin' Hopkins, and T-Bone Walker all remembered him vividly. Bits of his songs and guitar licks crept into hillbilly, Western Swing, and rockabilly repertoires, too: Carl Perkins's 1956 Sun recording of Jefferson's "Matchbox Blues" was later covered by his English fans, the Beatles.

For an artist who cast such a long shadow, we have few hard facts and little more than contradictory anecdotal fragments about Jefferson. He was a grubby lecher in one account, a pious and well-groomed man in another. What we know for certain is that Jefferson, more than any other individual, sparked the commercial record industry interest in country blues. Only after the success of his "Long Lonesome Blues" in 1926 was there an impetus to search out the likes of Charley Patton, Tommy Johnson, and the host of country blues singer-guitarists recorded in Jefferson's wake who never equalled his popularity.

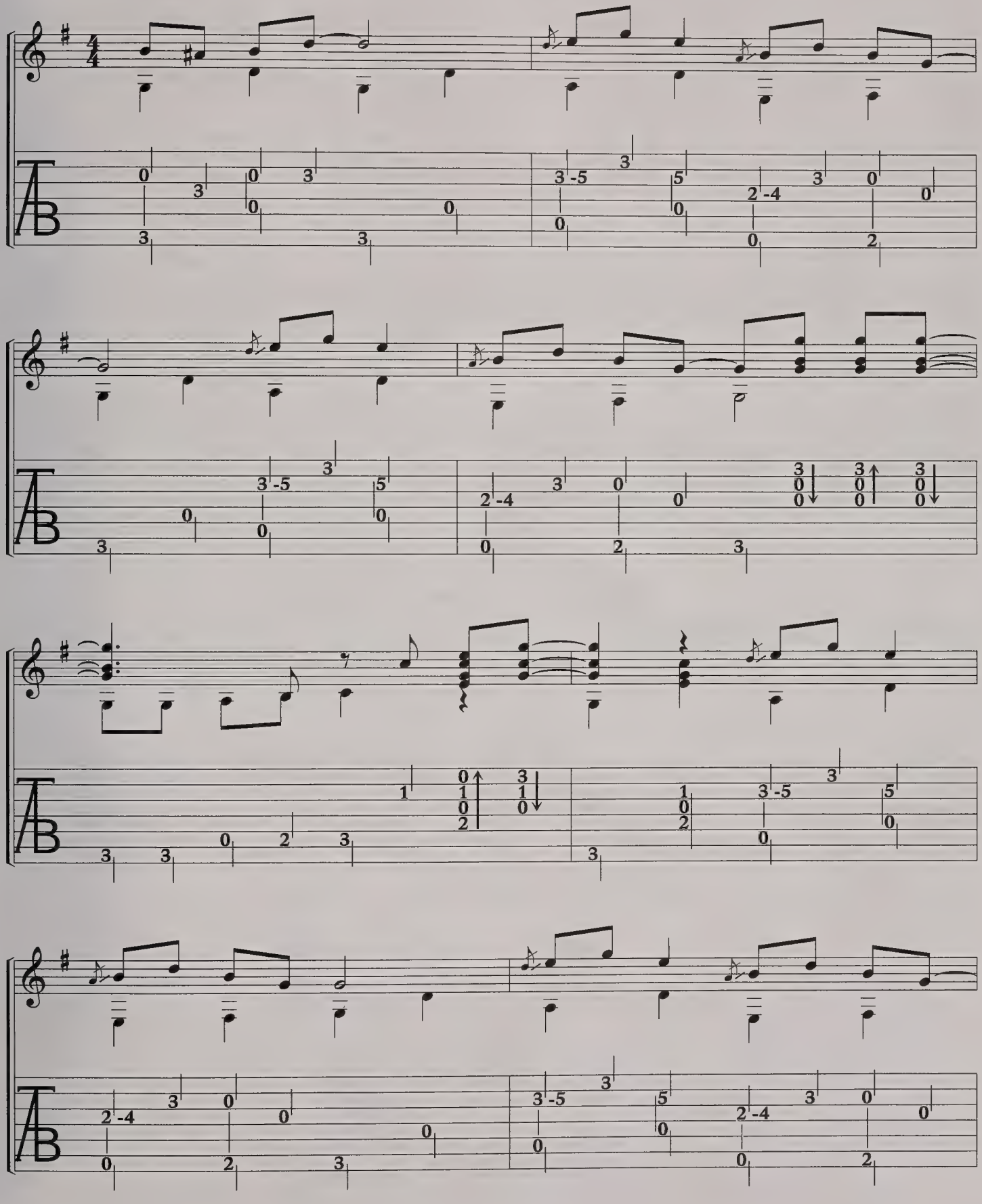
If our current fascination with Delta blues overshadows Lemon's legacy, it was not always so. In the 1950s, when the names Charlie Patton and Robert Johnson were unheard beyond a small circle of 78 collectors, the first album-length LP reissue of a country blues singer was of Jefferson. Riverside's pioneering album drew praise from both the jazz journal *Down Beat* and the folky *Sing Out!* Jefferson's name had sufficient currency for playwright Tennessee Williams to invoke it in his Southern Gothic tragedy, *The Fugitive Kind* (Brando starred in the film version) as a name, alongside those of Bessie Smith and Leadbelly, "written in the stars." Bob Dylan recorded Jefferson's "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean" on his 1962 debut album.

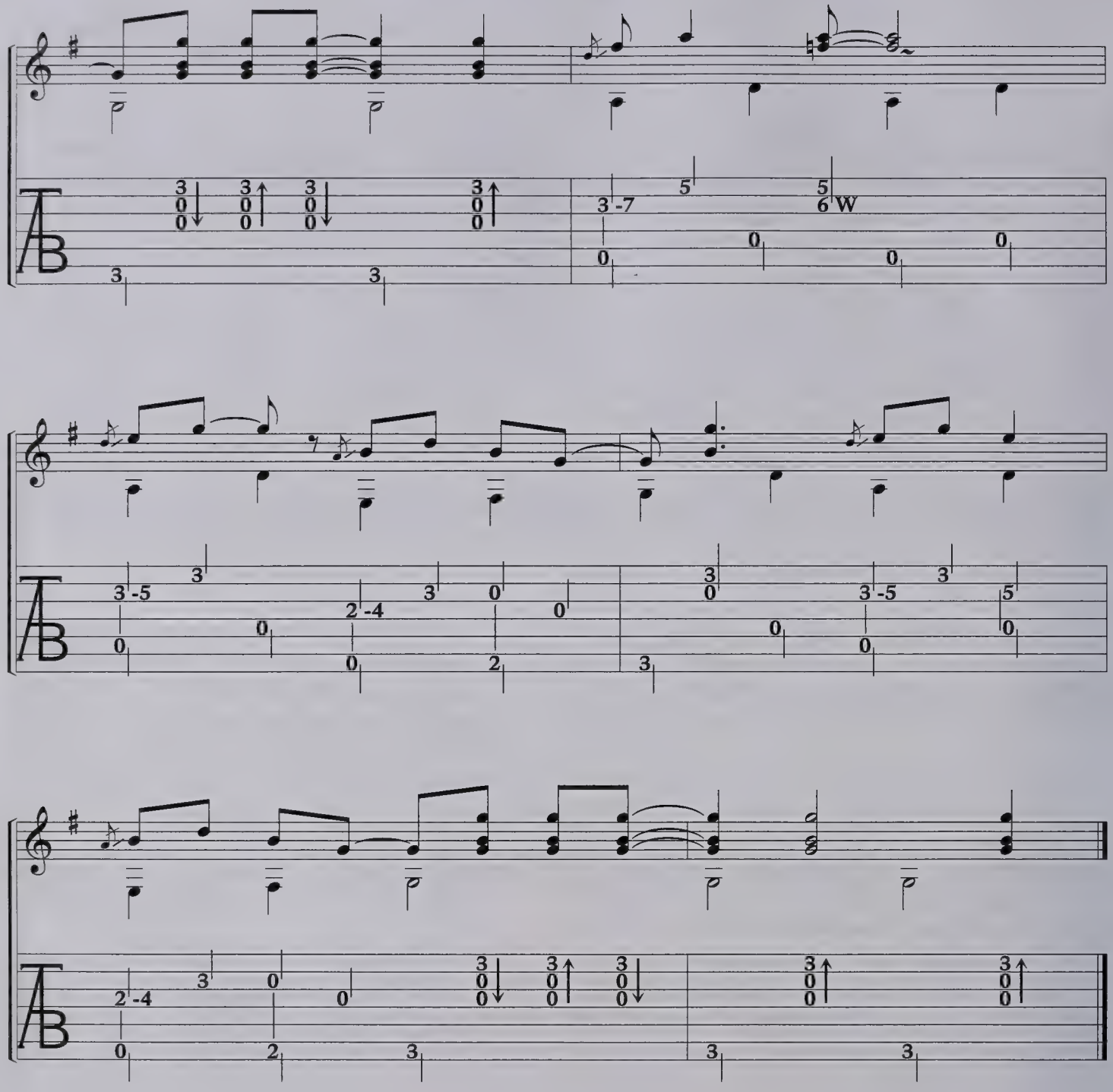
More than six decades since Jefferson reportedly froze to death on the streets of Chicago, his music remains uniquely compelling. There was a taught urgency in Jefferson's best music which equals the intensity of the Delta greats. Much of the drama in Jefferson's performances derives from his sophisticated contrapuntal interweaving of voice and guitar: Jefferson's guitar, more than accompanying his voice, is an independent and rhythmically complex voice itself which laces an exciting series of melodic punctuation marks around his stories in song. Few singer-guitarists in any idiom have achieved anything akin to Jefferson's subtle yet powerful voice-guitar conversations, a cohesive musical signature which, despite the wretched sound quality of some of his recordings, is still stunning today. Hearing the legacy of the man Paramount Records called "that sterling old-time guitar strumming blues singer from Dallas," we can easily empathize with the Texas guitar players of the 1920s who stood slack-jawed in his presence and would "wonder how in the hell he done it."

# Easy Rider Blues

trad. arr. by Blind Lemon Jefferson

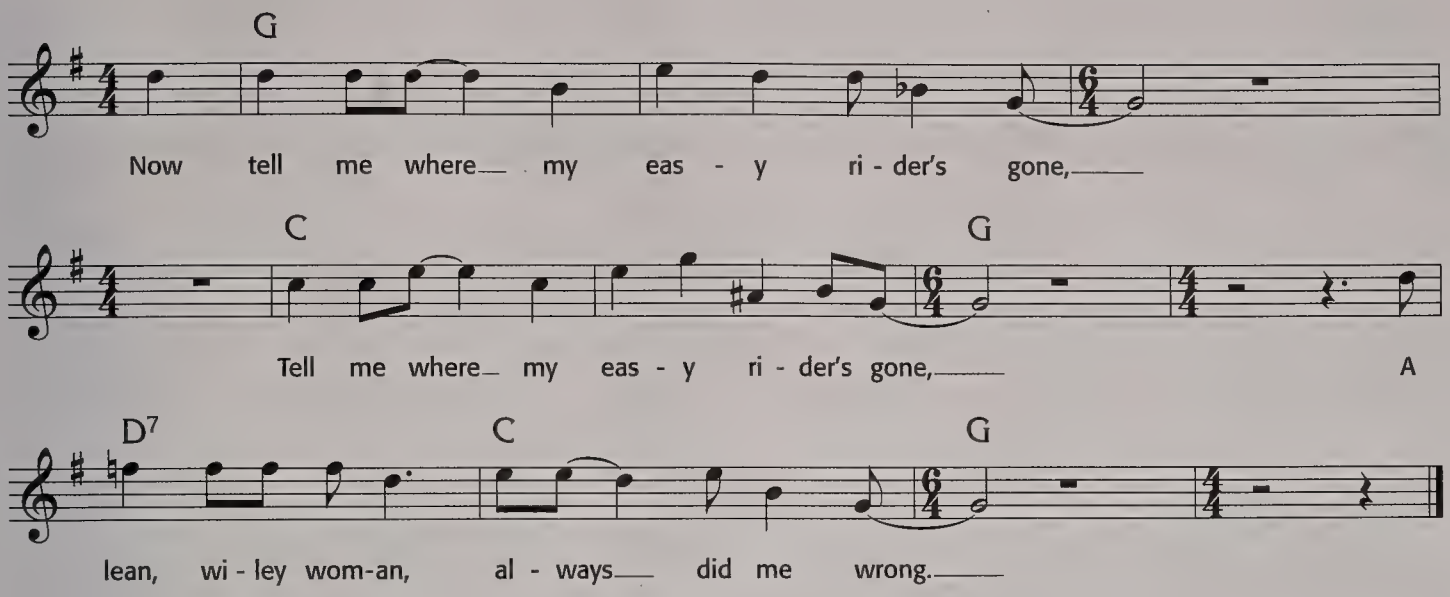
Standard Tuning





# Easy Rider Blues

## Lead Sheet




1. Now tell me where my easy rider's gone.
   Tell me where my easy rider's gone.
   A lean, wily woman always did me wrong.

2. Your easy rider died on the road.
   Man, the easy rider died on the road.
   I'm a poor boy here and ain't got nowhere to go.

3. There's gonna be the time that a woman don't need no man.
   Well, it's gonna be a time a woman don't need no man.
   Say, baby, shut your mouth and don't be raisin' sand.

4. Train I ride don't burn no coal at all.
   Train I ride don't burn no coal at all.
   The coal I burn everybody say is the cannonball.

5. I went to the depot,
   I mean I went to the depot, sat my suitcase down.
   The blues overtake me and the tears come rollin' down.

6. Woman I love, she must be out of town.
   Woman I love, man, she's out of town.
   She left me this mornin' with her face in a terrible frown.

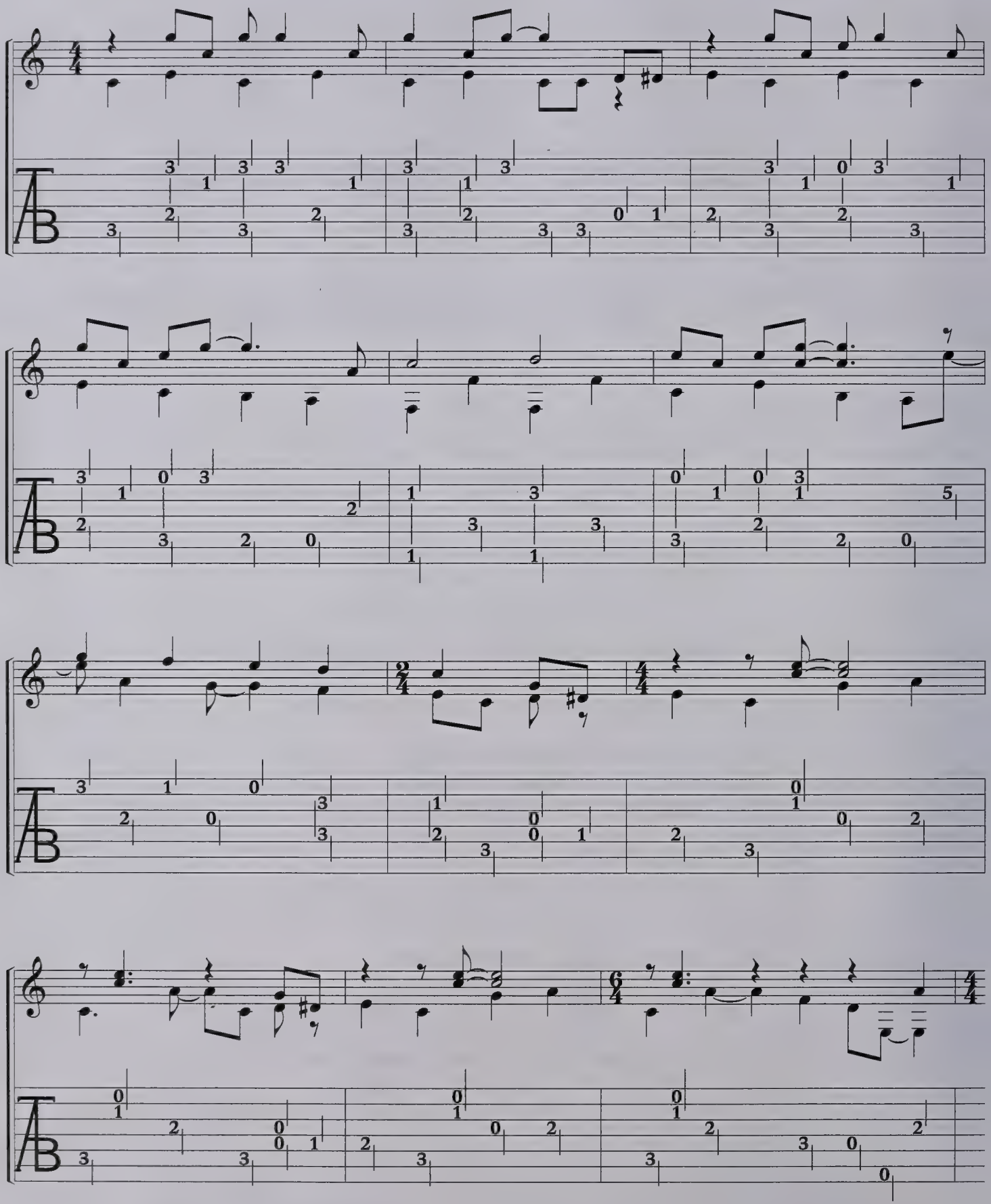
7. I got a gal across town, she crochets all the time.
   I got a gal across town, crochetin' all the time.
   Sugar, you don't quit crochetin', you're gonna lose your mind.

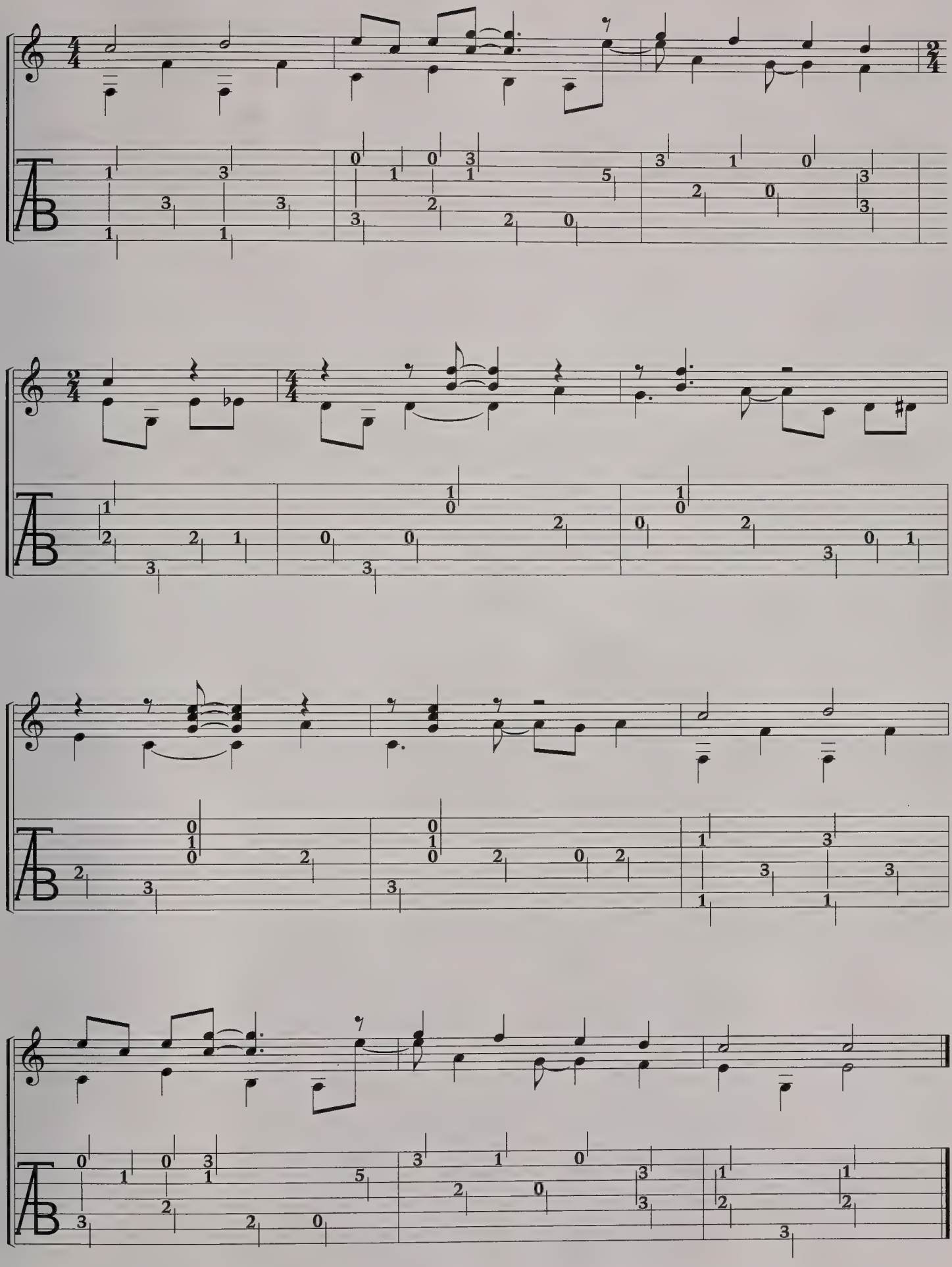
8. Say fair brown, what's the matter now?
   Say fair brown, what's the matter now?
   You're tryin' your best to quit me, woman, and you don't know how.

# Hot Dogs

trad. arr. by Blind Lemon Jefferson

Standard Tuning

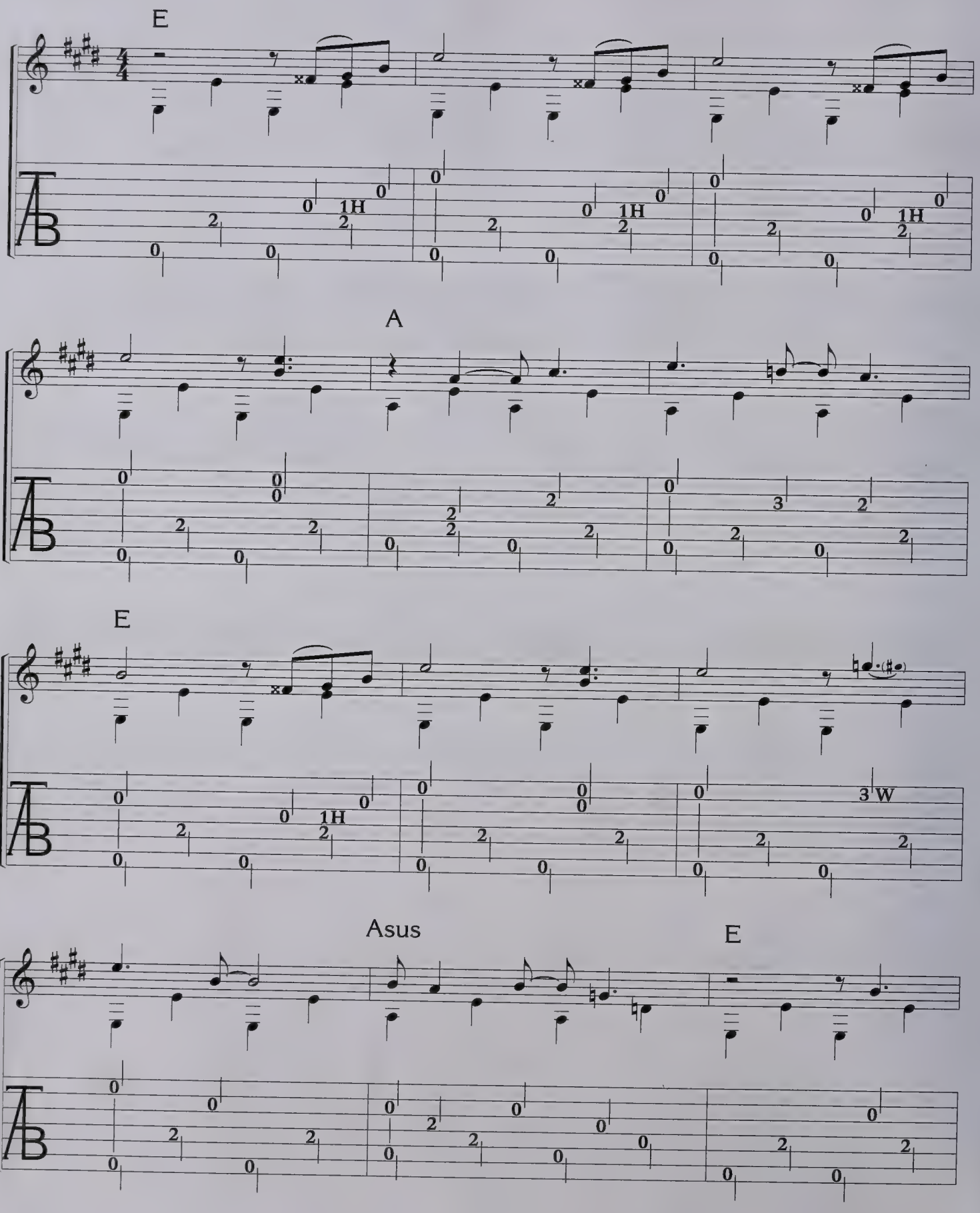


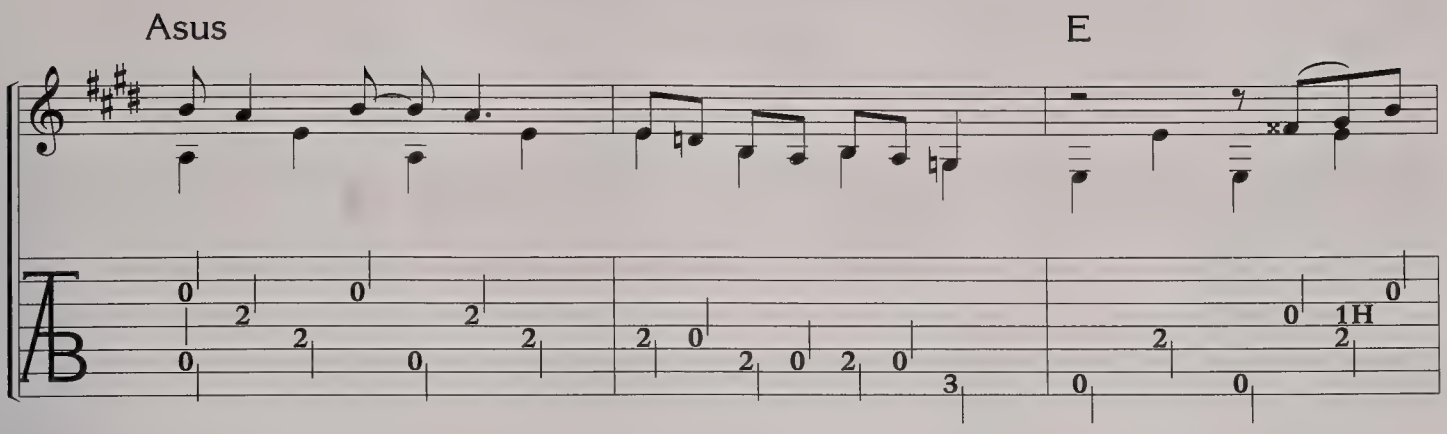


# One Kind Favor

trad. arr. by Blind Lemon Jefferson

Standard Tuning

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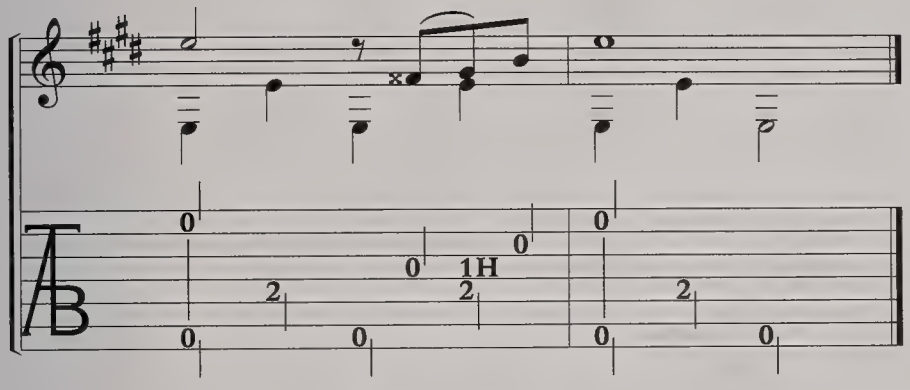
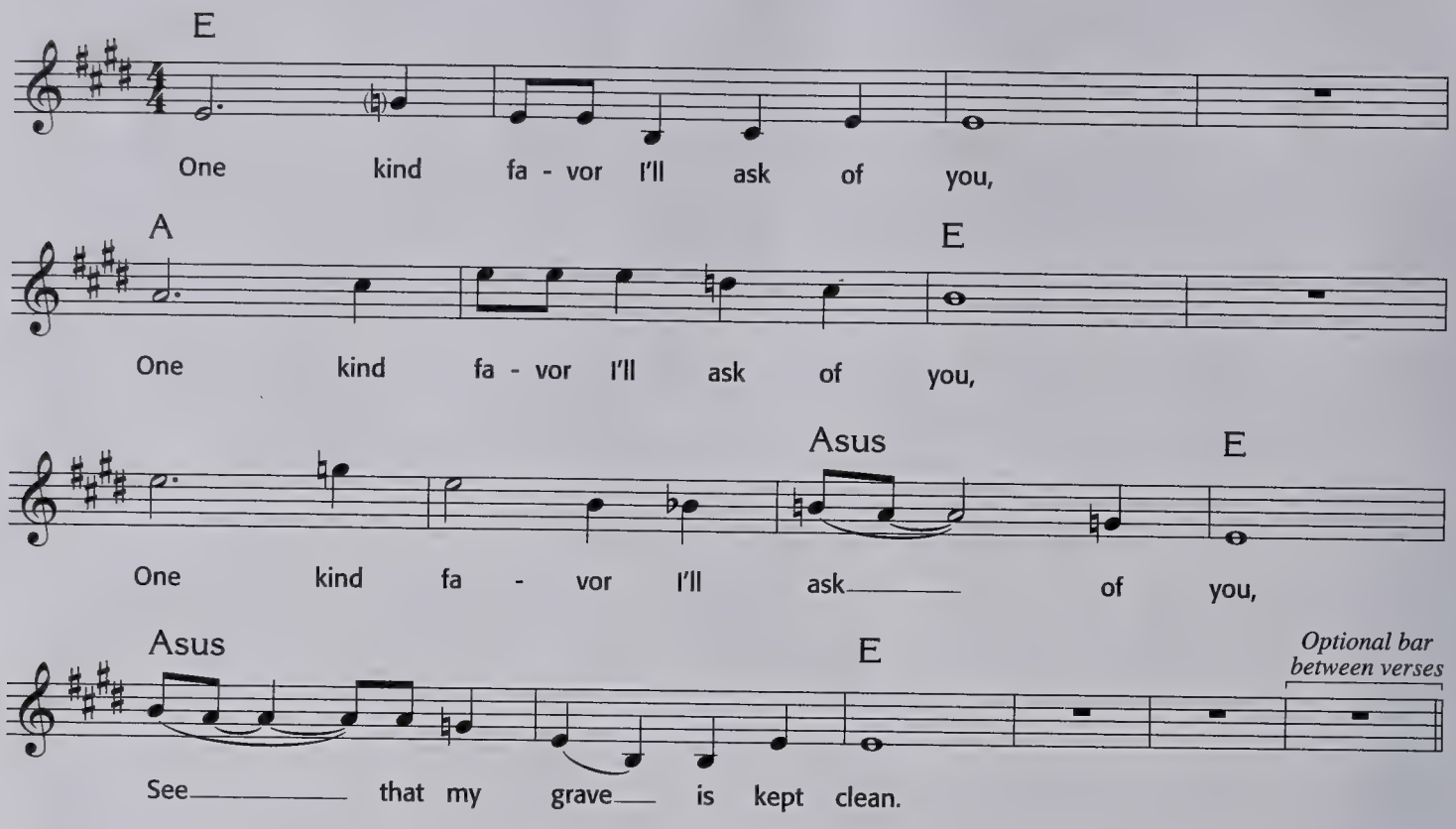


Cordially Yours
Lemon Jefferson

# One Kind Favor

## Lead Sheet




1. One kind favor I'll ask of you
   One kind favor I'll ask of you
   One kind favor I'll ask of you
   See that my grave is kept clean.

2. Two white horses in a line *(3x)*
   Take me to my burying ground

3. If you ever hear the church bell toll *(3x)*
   Then you know another boy's dead and gone.

4. Did you ever hear the coffin sound? *(3x)*
   Then you know another boy's in the ground.

5. My heart stops beating and my hands get cold *(3x)*
   Now I believe what the Bible told.

6. Dig my grave with a silver spade *(3x)*
   Lower me down down with a golden chain.

7. Repeat first verse.

# Lonnie Johnson

You could make a good argument that Lonnie Johnson is the most influential of all blues guitarists. With uncanny dexterity, unsurpassed technique, and an advanced harmonic sensibility, he was certainly the most sophisticated of the pre-war guitarists. Time and again, Johnson transcended stylistic barriers, as heard on his classic jazz records with Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington and his groundbreaking guitar duets with the Eddie Lang. But urbane, mournful blues are what he's best remembered for.

Alonzo Johnson was born circa 1894 in New Orleans, where he was exposed to a much wider array of musical styles than country-bred performers. His first instruments were violin and guitar, and he was soon adept with mandolin, banjo, kazoo, string bass, and piano. By 1910, Lonnie was playing in Storyville sporting houses. By 1917, he was playing with a small musical revue that visited Great Britain. Upon his return, he sang and played violin with jazz bands on Mississippi paddleboats. In 1925, Johnson secured a long-term OKeh recording contract by winning a blues contest. He recorded stacks of records during the next five years, becoming especially popular with black record-buyers. "Lonnie Johnson has never been recognized as one of the transcendental people who influenced everybody," contends Ry Cooder. "You can recognize Lonnie Johnson in just about anybody, with his voice and elegant style. You can hear people copying him right and left."

During the 1930s, Johnson recorded for Columbia, Decca, and Bluebird, eventually moving to a small-ensemble format. Depending on who he was playing with, he could thump his guitar like a rural bluesman or use it to comp and fill like a pianist. His crisp rhythms revealed a vast chord vocabulary, and he had a fabulous way of ending songs with elegant chord climbs. His one-of-a-kind finger vibrato could approximate the sounds of a zither, mandolin, or bottleneck guitar. During his first dozen years in the limelight, Johnson favored a 12-string acoustic that he modified into a 9- or 10-string by removing the octave strings from the lower courses. Big Bill Broonzy noted that Lonnie flatpicked all the time, but the presence of bass notes during some of his treble-string passages suggests that Johnson may have played fingerstyle too.

Between 1945 and the 1960s, Lonnie Johnson recorded for King, Aladdin, Federal, Bluesville, Storyville, Folkways, and other labels. Throughout his illustrious career, he always stayed true to himself. "He was a genius," insisted John Lee Hooker. "And nobody sound like Lonnie Johnson. You could tell it was Lonnie Johnson every time he pick up a guitar. Oh, he could play a lot of notes, but you know who he was because he had his own style, man. He's blues and he's pop—there's some of everything, the way he plays it. He loved everybody. He was a hero to everybody. Black and white, wherever you are—they loved Lonnie Johnson." Lonnie Johnson passed away at home on June 16, 1970.

Lonnie Johnson recorded "Life Saver Blues" in New York City on November 9, 1927, for OKeh Records. Subtle and sophisticated, his arrangement displays his considerable strengths as a guitarist. His timing is impeccable, his passing chords sublime, his bends tender and true. This is played in the D position, capoed up two frets. Pay special attention to your enunciation, because to do Lonnie Johnson right, you've got play it clean.

Lonnie Johnson recorded his suggestive "Go Back to Your No Good Man" in New York City on August 12, 1932. Like most of his songs, this one addresses the heartbreak of love. Audio evidence suggests Johnson flatpicked a standard 6-string guitar at this session, rather than his modified 9- or 10-string. His solo break provides a textbook example of Johnson's poignant, well-controlled string bends and spot-on technique.

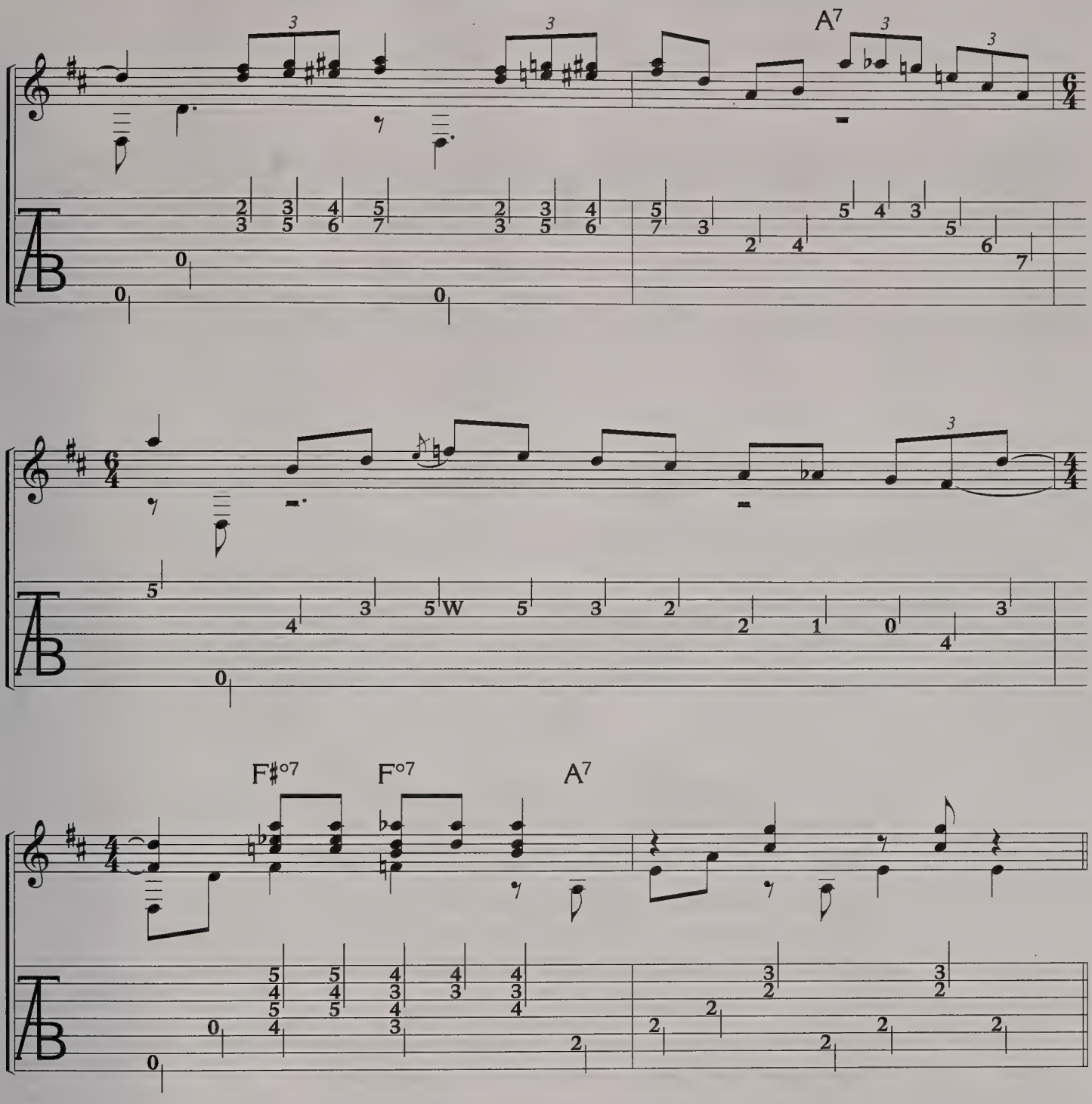
# Go Back to Your No Good Man

as performed by Lonnie Johnson

Tuning: DGDGBE

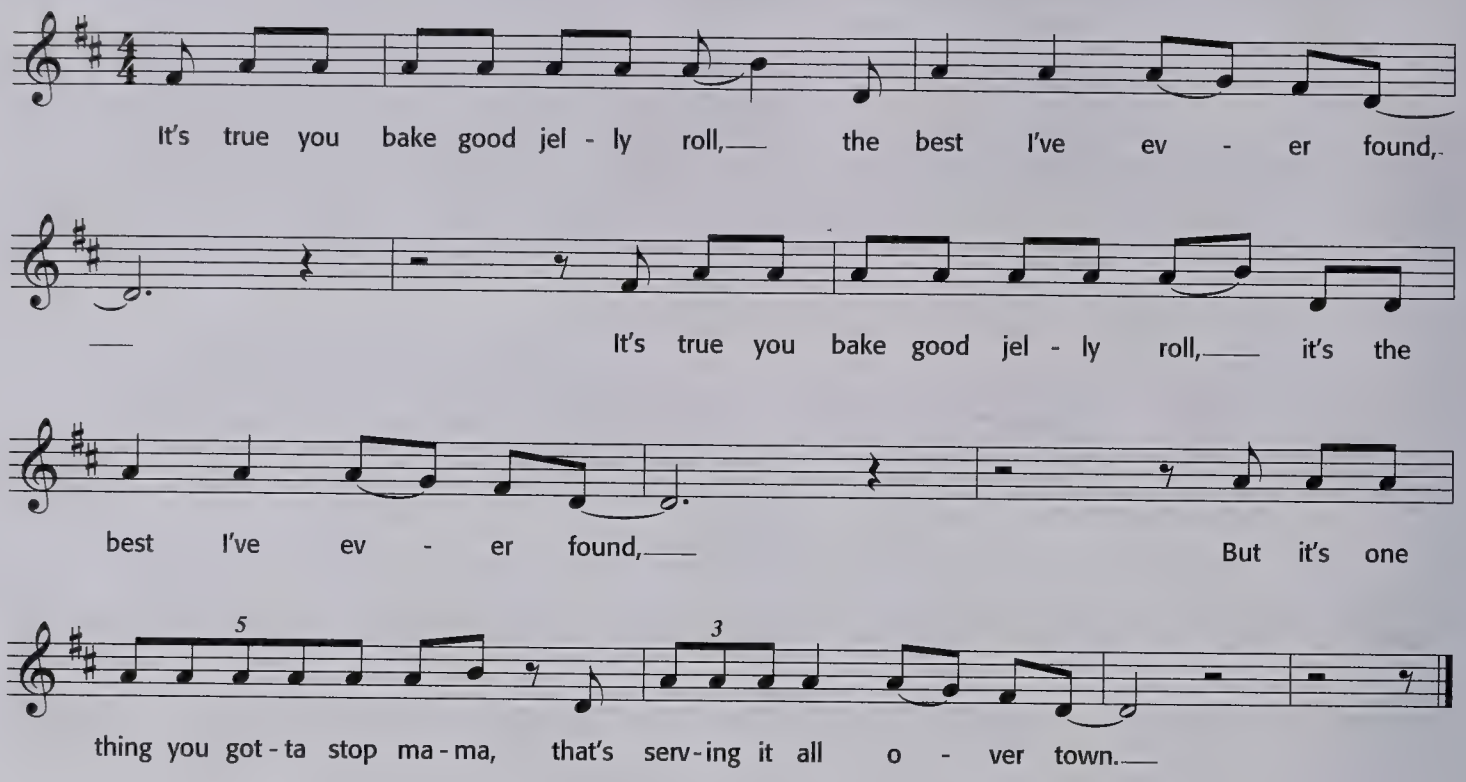
G
D
A7
Gm
D
A7

ALTERNATE VERSE BEGINNING
BREAK
G


A7
F#°7
F°7
A7

# Go Back to Your No Good Man

## Lead Sheet


It's true you bake good jel - ly roll, the best I've ev - er found,
It's true you bake good jel - ly roll, it's the
best I've ev - er found, But it's one
5
3
thing you got - ta stop ma - ma, that's serv - ing it all o - ver town.

1. It's true you bake good jelly roll, the best I've ever found,
   It's true you bake good jelly roll, it's the best I've ever found,
   But it's one thing you gotta stop, mama, that's serving it all over town.

2. Don' you think because I love you, you can you can play me for a chump to my face,
   Now you think because I love you, you can play me for a chump right to my face,
   But I'm not as dumb as you think, there's another woman to fill your place.

3. Give me them clothes I bought you, take my diamonds off your hand,
   Give me them clothes I bought you, take my diamonds off your hand,
   Now you just like I found you, go back to your handy man.

4. Now I put shoes on your feet when your bare feet was pattin' the ground,
   Now I put shoes on your feet when your bare feet was pattin' the ground.
   While I was out slaving for you, you was chasing every rat in town.

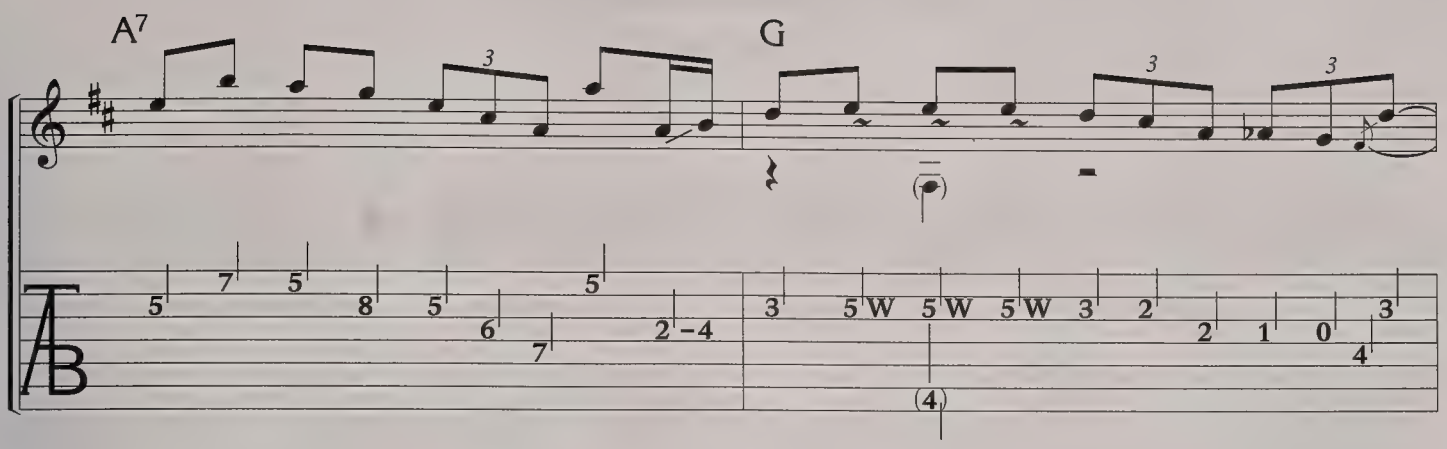
5. Now woman I stuck with you when you didn't have a friend at all,
   Now woman I stuck with you when you didn't have a friend at all.
   So give them shoes I bought you (and) that wig, and let your head go bald.

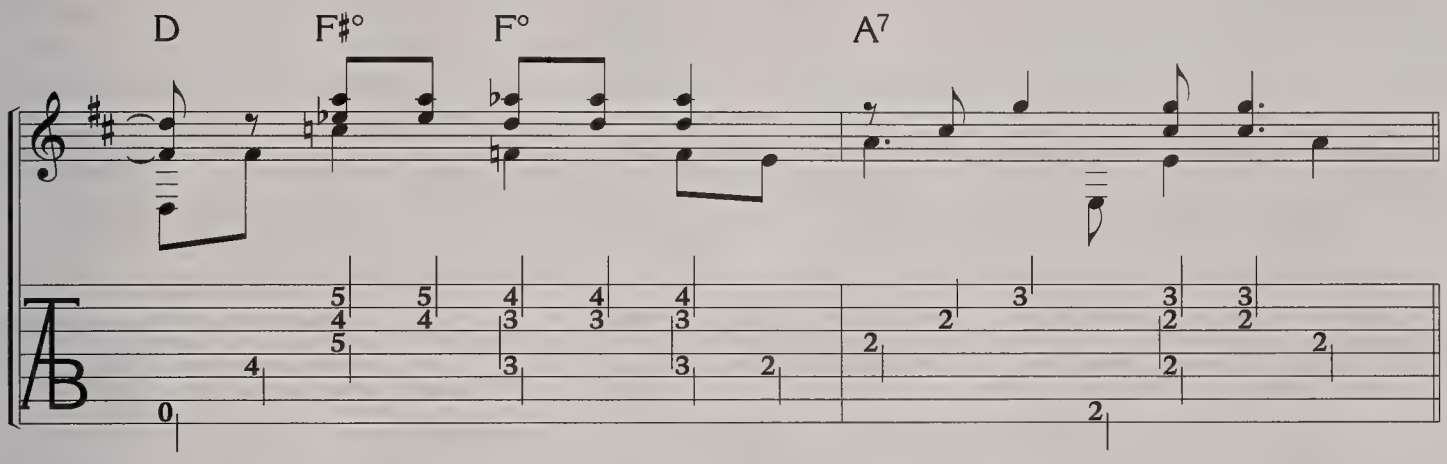
# Life Saver Blues

as performed by Lonnie Johnson

Tuning: DGDGBE

D
BREAK
G
D

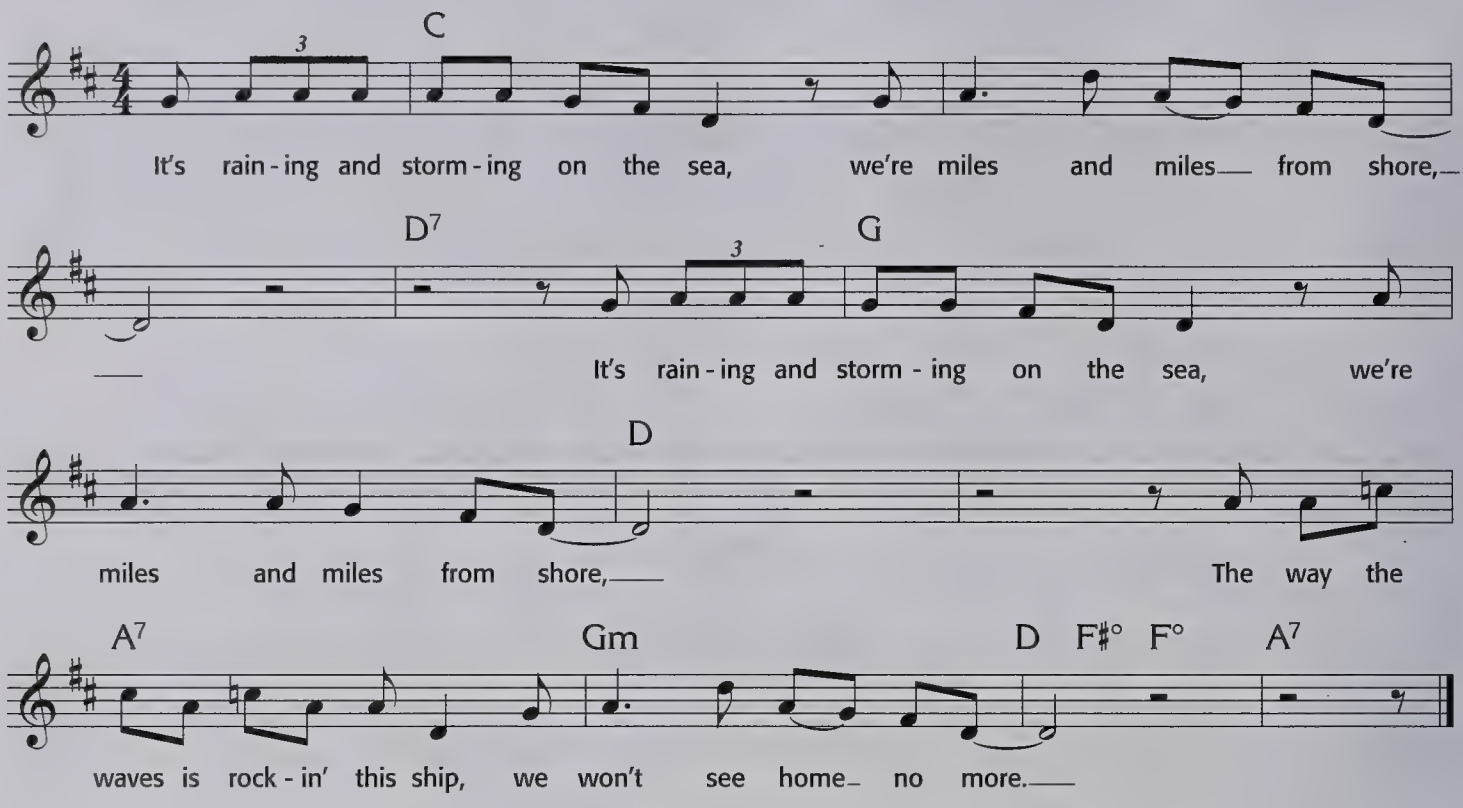


*Lonnie Johnson, Andrew Harris and Dan Dixon, 1941*
*Photo by Russell Lee*

# Life Saver Blues

## Lead Sheet


C
It's rain - ing and storm - ing on the sea, we're miles and miles from shore,
D7
G
It's rain - ing and storm - ing on the sea, we're
D
miles and miles from shore, The way the
A7
Gm
D F♯° F°
A7
waves is rock - in' this ship, we won't see home no more.

1. It's raining and storming on the sea, we're miles and miles from shore,
   It's raining and storming on the sea, we're miles and miles from shore,
   The way the waves is rockin' this ship, we won't see home no more.

2. The wind is so strong, turning this old ship around,
   This waves is so strong, turning this old ship around.
   Something tells me — it won't be long before were sinking down.

3. The captain say get your life saver, fasten them around your waist,
   Captain say get your life saver, fasten them around your waist,
   Because were sinking down and the lifeboat is your safest place.

4. And we floated all night long in the storm, lost miles and miles from shore.
   And the water was freezing and the rain begin to fall.
   I say girls and boys lets pray 'cause we won't see home no more.

5. Uncle Sam's ship was coming, painted in red, white and blue,
   Uncle Sam's ship was coming, painted in red, white and blue.
   We say we live in New York City, red and white, blue brought us all the way through.

# Charley Jordan

***"If you want to go to heaven when you d.i.e.,***
***You got to put on your collar and your t.i.e., now."***

—Charley Jordan, *"Keep It Clean"*

W.C. Handy was hearing blues on the streets of St. Louis even before the turn of the century, and his most famous composition, a blues with a tango break, concerned one of that city's women. By the time blues recording began in the 1920s, St. Louis was a blues center on a par with such cities as Memphis, Atlanta, and Chicago. It was a major Midwestern thoroughfare to points north and south, and ramblers like Big Joe Williams used it as home base. Lonnie Johnson came up the river from New Orleans and was a major participant in the St. Louis blues for awhile, as were pianists Roosevelt Sykes and Peetie Wheatstraw, among others.

Ironically, one of the central figures of the St. Louis blues scene of the 1930s is a relatively forgotten man, Charley Jordan. Between 1930 and '36, Jordan made more than 50 recordings as leader and was accompanist on many more. He acted as local A&R man for the Vocalion and Decca labeled, and reportedly got the man who called himself the "devil's son-in-law," Peetie Wheatstraw, on record. Big Joe Williams told Paul Garon, "All these people saying they're Peetie Wheatstraw's buddy, but his real buddy was Charles Jordan. Jordan first got Peetie on records, you know, and he really was his buddy for all the time Peetie was alive."

Jordan was born in Mabelvale, Arkansas, and served in the Army during World War I. He may have bummed around before settling in St. Louis in the mid-1920s, when his extra-musical career became bootlegging. It was risky business and around 1928 Jordan was shot (some accounts have a bullet lodged in his spine) and disabled (he walked on crutches). However, Jordan still managed to be a regular performer in the rough red-light district called "The Valley," where his teaming with pianist Wheatstraw was especially popular. Jordan is credited with writing many of the blues the self-proclaimed "High Sheriff from Hell" recorded.

The often whimsical songs Jordan himself recorded belie the violent world in which he apparently lived. There's a wry, gentle humor in many of Jordan's songs, a child-like delight in playing with words and imagery. His melodies, too, often evince a naive charm. Jordan's guitar picking masterfully combines an airy delicacy with punchy dynamics he may have gathered from such Mississippians as Big Joe Williams. Paul Oliver has praised Jordan's "uncorrupted country style of blues guitar with an effortless, light technique." Chris Smith observes in Jordan "an extraordinary sense of rhythm. The steady pulse that underlies his playing and singing is often a long way removed from the accenting of the guitar part; what Bernard Klatzko calls "inexact timing (that's exact)."

Jordan did not live to be rediscovered in the blues revival of the 1960s, and his stylistic influence was perhaps less than it might have been elsewhere, given the popularity of blues piano (and the relative dearth of guitarists) in St. Louis. While his reputation today little reflects his stature in St. Louis sixty-some years ago, Jordan's recorded legacy offers many delights which still evoke smiles and explain why he was so highly regarded in his prime.

# Hunkie Tunkie Blues

by Charley Jordan

Standard Tuning

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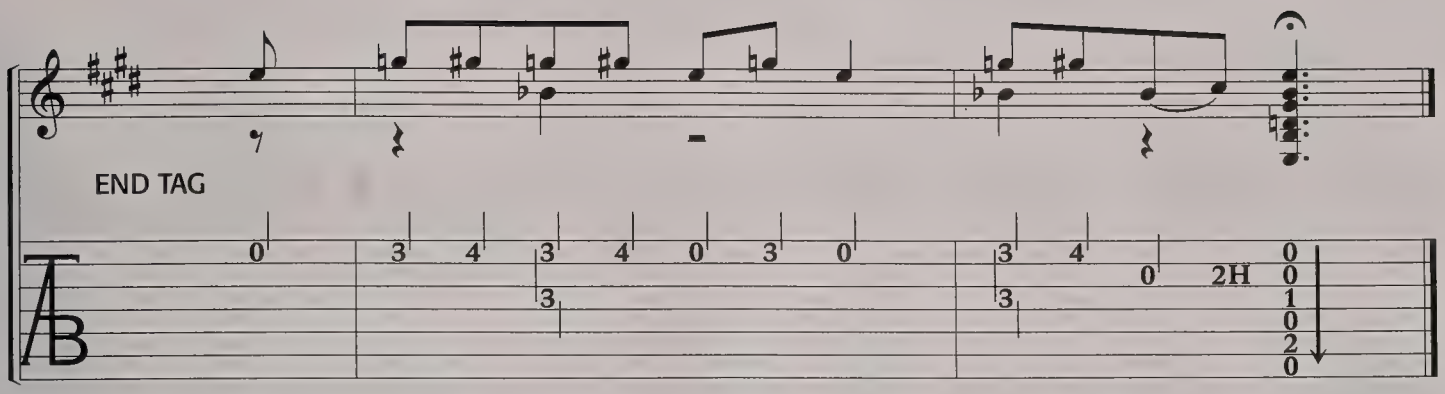
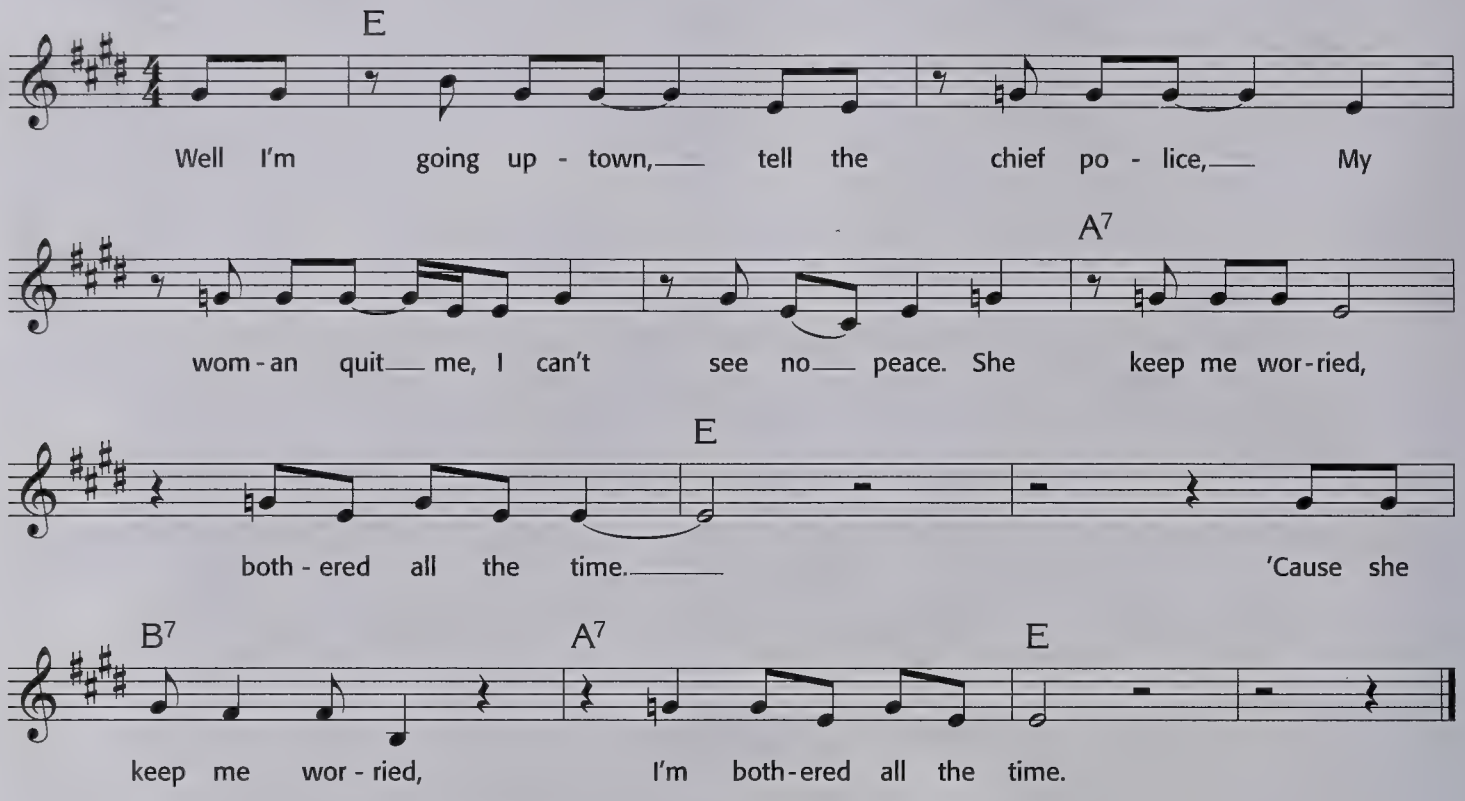


*Charley Jordan*

# Hunkie Tunkie Blues

## Lead Sheet


E
Well I'm going up - town, tell the chief po - lice, My
A7
wom - an quit me, I can't see no peace. She keep me wor - ried,
E
both - ered all the time. 'Cause she
B7
A7
E
keep me wor - ried, I'm both - ered all the time.

1. Says I'm goin' uptown, tell the chief police,
   My woman quit me, I can't see no peace.
   She keeps me worried, bothered all the time.
   'Cause she keeps me worried, I'm bothered all the time.

2. Said I love you woman, love you husband too.
   Have to, love your husband get to be with you.
   'Cause he don't 'low no laying around his house.
   Because he don't 'low no laying around his house.

3. My momma told me, my papa too.
   Don't let no woman be the death of you.
   'Cause, she didn't 'low me to stay out all night long.
   Because she didn't 'low me to stay out all night long.

4. What you goin' do when they tear your barrelhouse down.
   Goin' pack my suitcase hunt some other town.
   Now, what you goin' do when they tear your barrelhouse down.
   Goin' pack my suitcase and hunt some other town.

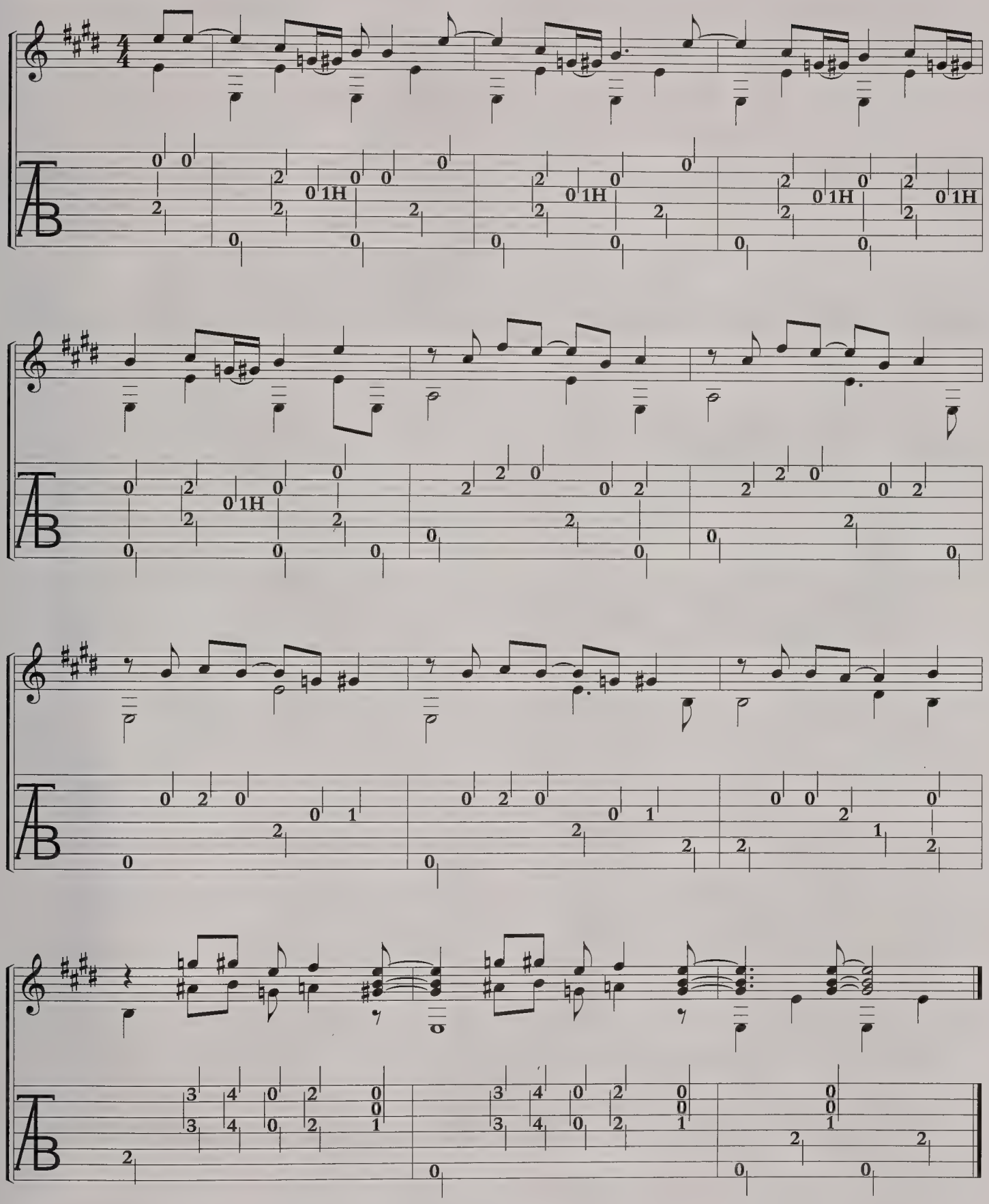
5. Well the say everybody talkin' about your hunkie tunkie blue.
   Everybody talkin' about your hunkie tunkie blue.
   Well, they say everybody talkin' about your mother hunkie tunkie blue.

6. Well, they say everybody talkin', about your hunkie tunkie baby.
   You oughta see that curly headed monkey.
   Head is curly, babe, and bushy too.
   'Cause his head is curly, babe, and bushy too.

# Keep It Clean

by Charley Jordan

Standard Tuning



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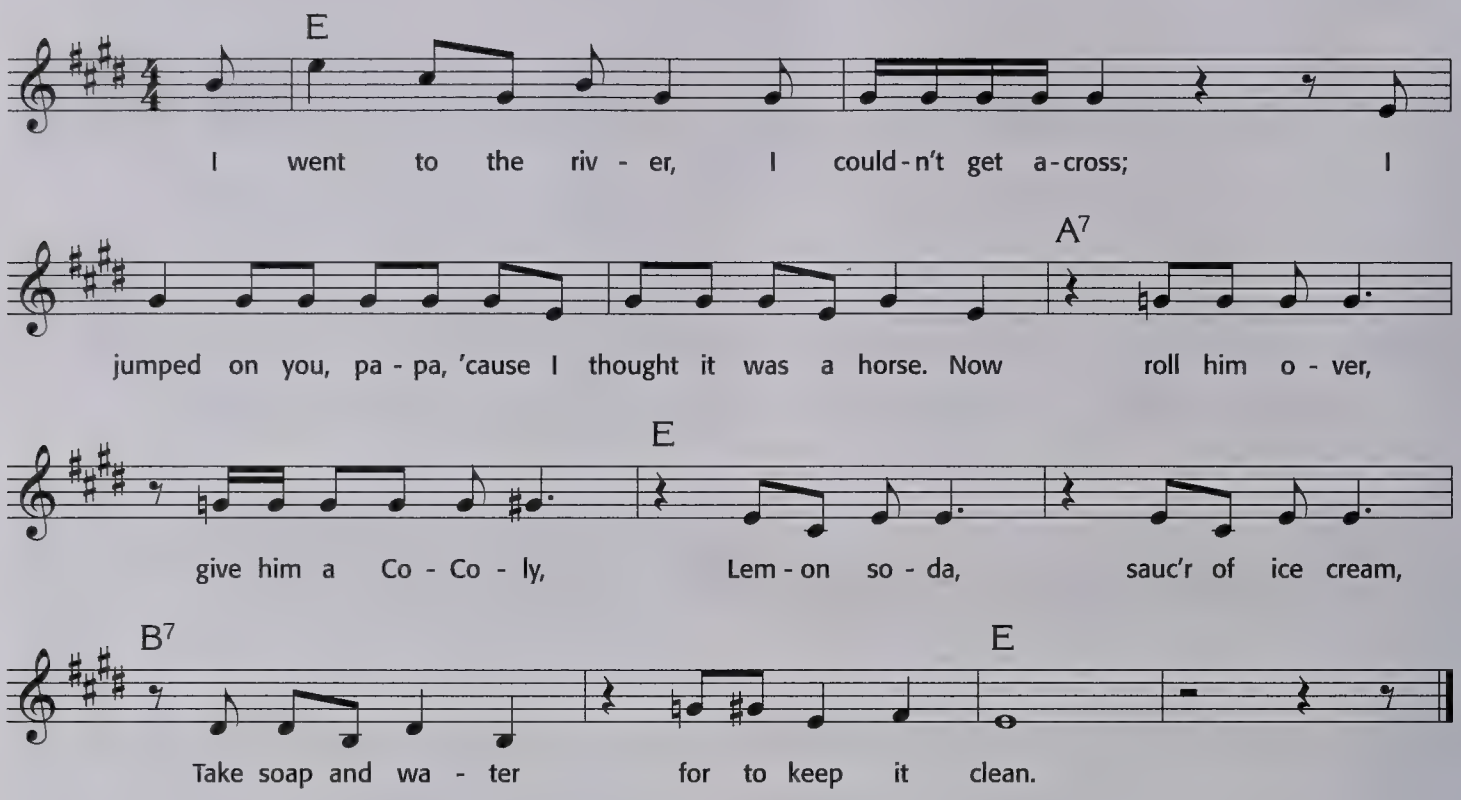
# Keep It Clean

## Lead Sheet


E
I went to the riv - er, I could-n't get a-cross; I
A7
jumped on you, pa - pa, 'cause I thought it was a horse. Now roll him o - ver,
E
give him a Co - Co - ly, Lem - on so - da, sauc'r of ice cream,
B7
E
Take soap and wa - ter for to keep it clean.

1. I went to the river, couldn't get across.
   I jumped on your papa, 'cause I thought he was a horse now,
   Rode him over, give him Coca Cola, Lemon soda, saucer of ice cream,
   Take soap and water, for to keep it clean.

2. Up she jumped, down she fell,
   Her mouth flew open like a Mercury shell now,
   Got her over, give her Coca Cola, Lemon soda, saucer of ice cream,
   Take soap and water, for to keep it clean.

3. Your sister was a teddy, your daddy was a bear.
   Put the muzzle on your momma, 'cause you got bad hair now,
   Ride her over, give her Coca Cola, Lemon soda, saucer of ice cream,
   Take soap and water, for to keep it clean.

4. If you want to hear, now here's the last,
   Take him down to the river and wash his yas, yas, yas.
   Got him over, give him Coca Cola, Lemon soda, saucer of ice cream,
   Take soap and water, for to keep it clean.

5. If you want to go to heaven when you D.I.E.
   You got to put on your collar and your T.I.E. now
   Ride him over, give him Coca Cola, Lemon soda, saucer of ice cream,
   Take soap and water, for to keep it clean.

6. Now if you want to get the rabbit out of the L.O.G.
   You got to sit on the stump like the D.O.G. now
   Ride him over, give him Coca Cola, Lemon soda, saucer of ice cream,
   Take soap and water, for to keep it clean.

7. Run here doctor, run here fast See what's the matter with this yas, yas, yas.
   Rode him over, give him Coca Cola, Lemon soda, saucer of ice cream,
   Soap and water, for to keep it clean.

*Josh White*

# Josh White

***"My guitar is my baby. It does what I want it to do."***

—Josh White

There are those who still swear he was the sexiest performer they ever saw. With his shirt unbuttoned at the collar, a lit cigarette perched rakishly behind his right ear, and his right leg propped on a folding chair, Josh White's intimate assertiveness slew the sophisticated patrons of New York's Cafe Society Downtown in 1940. In the decade that followed, there were command performances at the White House, movie roles, and many records ("One Meat Ball" was a bona fide hit). White arrived at a time when Leadbelly had piqued white urban interest in African-American folk song and blues, and made the music more accessible with his clear annunciation, debonair looks, and slyly sensuous stage manner. Arnold Shaw once described him as a "pre-Belafonte sex idol."

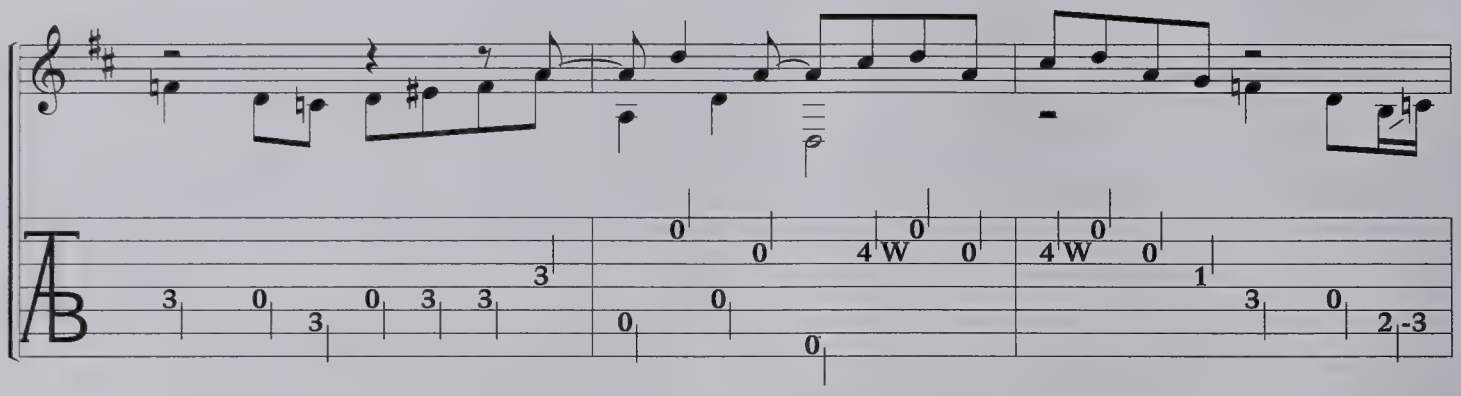
White was playing the White House when his fellow "Piedmont style" singer-guitarists Blind Boy Fuller and Gary Davis were playing streetcorners for change. His extraordinary run of luck halted with his testimony before the House Unamerican Activities Committee in 1950. White's appearance as a "friendly witness" alienated him from his associates on the folk Left (Woodie Guthrie had once called him "a shining example of a fighting artist with a message"), and his "guilt of association" scared away his mainstream audience. White lingered in artistic twilight for half a decade, but emerged again as the "folk boom" erupted, a move which White had anticipated and inspired as much as anyone. The man who sang "Uncle Sam Says" for Roosevelt would later sing for President Kennedy, who told him he had been a fan since his college-era exposure to White's records.

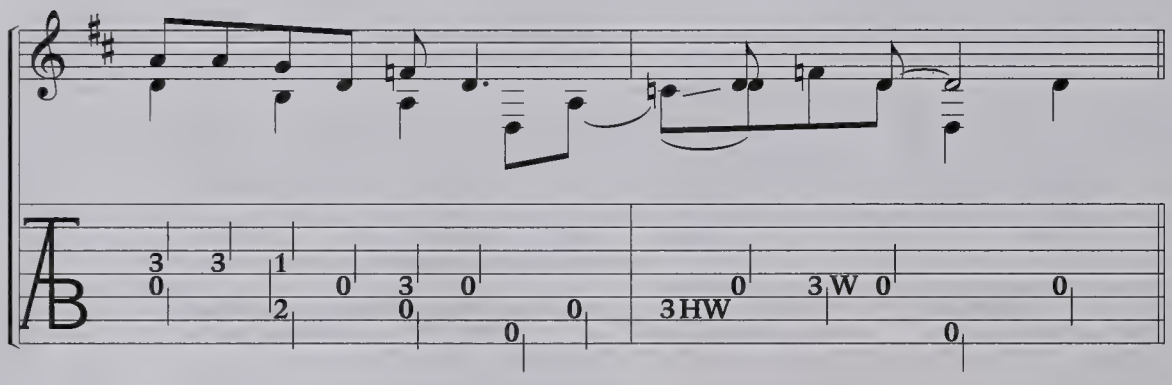
Joshua Daniel White grew up a preacher's son in Greenville, South Carolina. (Greenville spawned several great singer-guitarists, notably Rev. Gary Davis.) White began a grim apprenticeship as a "lead boy" to blind singer-guitarists when he was 12, and made his first records in 1928 as accompanist to Blind Joe Taggart. (White remembered these men as relentlessly "hard," and remarked years later, "I wouldn't give a blind man a penny now.") His solo recording career began in 1932, and he wore two hats as "Pinewood Tom" the blues singer and Joshua White, "the Singing Christian." White was among the first of the "Piedmont style" blues singer-guitarists to record, and his earlier recordings were probably much emulated. Well in advance of the first recordings of Blind Boy Fuller or Gary Davis, White recorded licks we now associate with them.

The first phase of White's career ended in 1936, due in part to an injury of his right hand. When his recording career resumed in 1940, White was settled in New York and lauded by both the activist folk community and the bohemian cabaret crowd. He recorded some of the first explicit protest songs concerning black experience in the South, such as the grim account of a lynching, "Strange Fruit." At more than 50 years remove from the times, it's difficult to grasp how daring such songs then were. White cleverly made them palatable via his charm and smooth delivery, and by balancing them with such trifles as "Foggy Foggy Dew." But he made his point, and it's sad that his pioneering civil rights songs were obscured by his role in the HUAC mess. Likewise, the tendency of country-blues aficionados for the very qualities that made him a star in the 1940s fails to place his achievements in the context of their times. (How much better if he had just disappeared in 1936 and waited to be rediscovered in the '60s!) White may have "pasteurized" his Piedmont blues style for wider (and whiter) consumption, but his persuasive presence in the 1940s paved the way for the appreciation of less accessible blues singer-guitarists in subsequent years.

# Jesus Gonna Make Up My Dying Bed

Open D Tuning: DADF♯AD
(tuned down a further whole step)





*Josh White*

# Jesus Gonna Make Up My Dying Bed

## Lead Sheet

(D)
Now in the time of dy - ing, I don't want no - bod - y to
moan. All I want my friends to do, come and fold
my dy - ing arms. Well, well, well, So I
can die eas - y, Well, well, well. Well, well, well,
Je - sus gon - na make up my dy - ing bed.

1. Now in the time of dying, I don't want nobody to moan
   All I want my friends to do, Come and fold my dying arms.

*Chorus:* Well, well, well, So I can die easy. Well, well, well...
Well, well, well... Jesus gonna make up, my dying bed.

2. Meet me Jesus, meet me, Won't you meet me in the middle of the air
   And if these wings should fail me Lord, Won't you meet me with another pair.

*Chorus:* Well, well, well, Won't you meet me Jesus. Well, well, well...
Well, well, well... Jesus gonna make up, my dying bed.

3. I'm going on down to the river, Stick my sword up in the sand.
   Gonna shout my troubles over Lord, I done made it to the promised land.

*Chorus:* Well, well, well, I done crossed over. Well, well, well...
Well, well, well, I done crossed over. Jesus gonna make up, my dying bed.

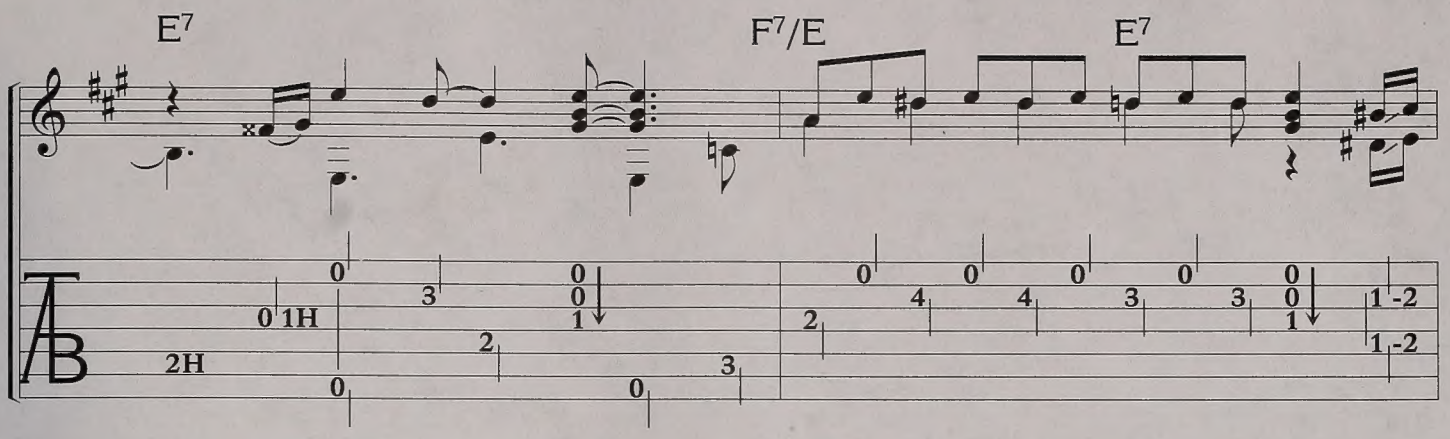
4. Ever since I've been acquainted with Jesus, We haven't been a minute apart.
   He placed a receiver in my hand, True religion in my heart.

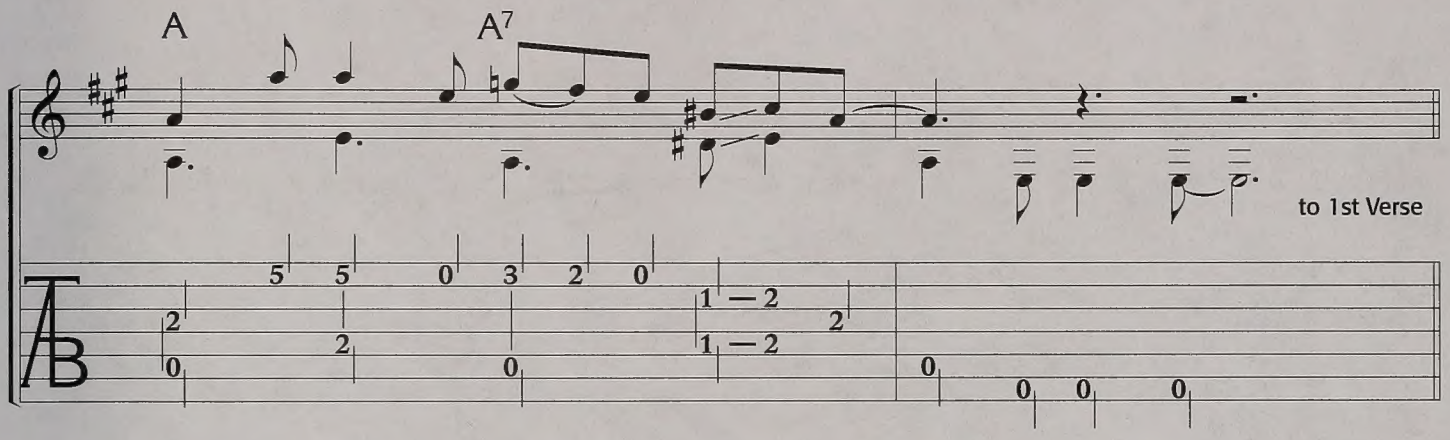
*Chorus:* Well, well, well, I can ring up my Jesus. Well, well, well...
Well, well, well, I can ring up Jesus. Jesus gonna make up, my dying bed.

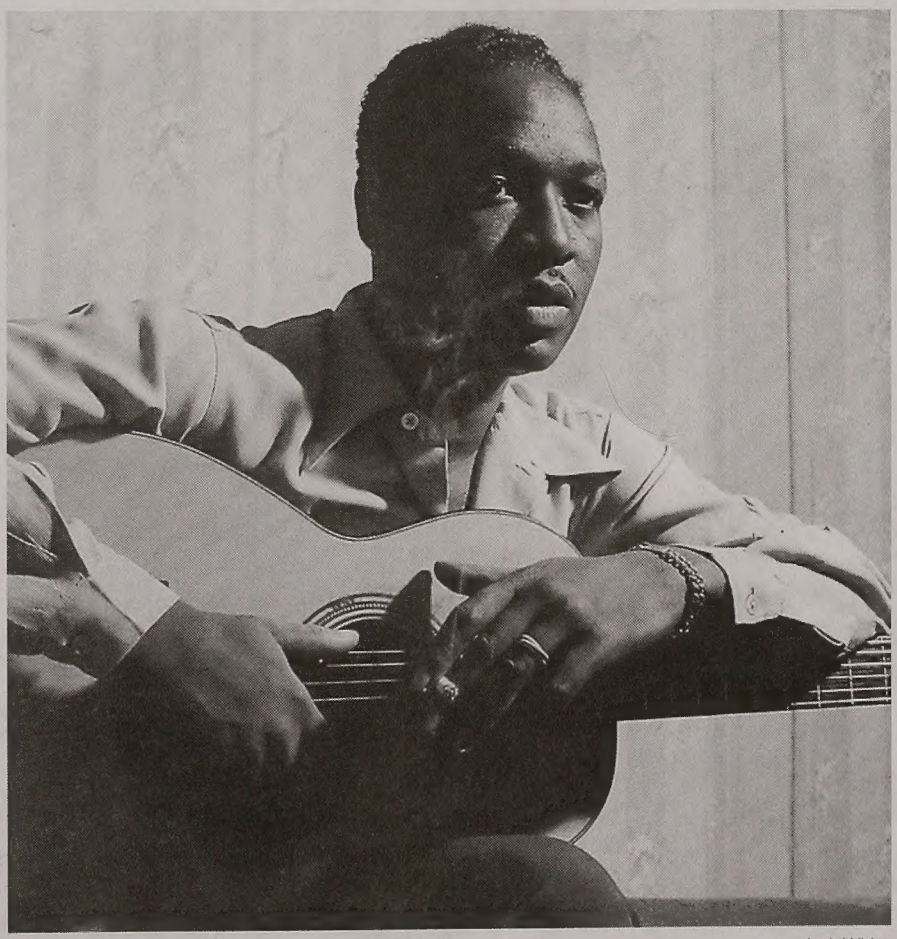
Repeat verse 3.

# Little Brother Blues

Standard Tuning (tuned ½ step down)



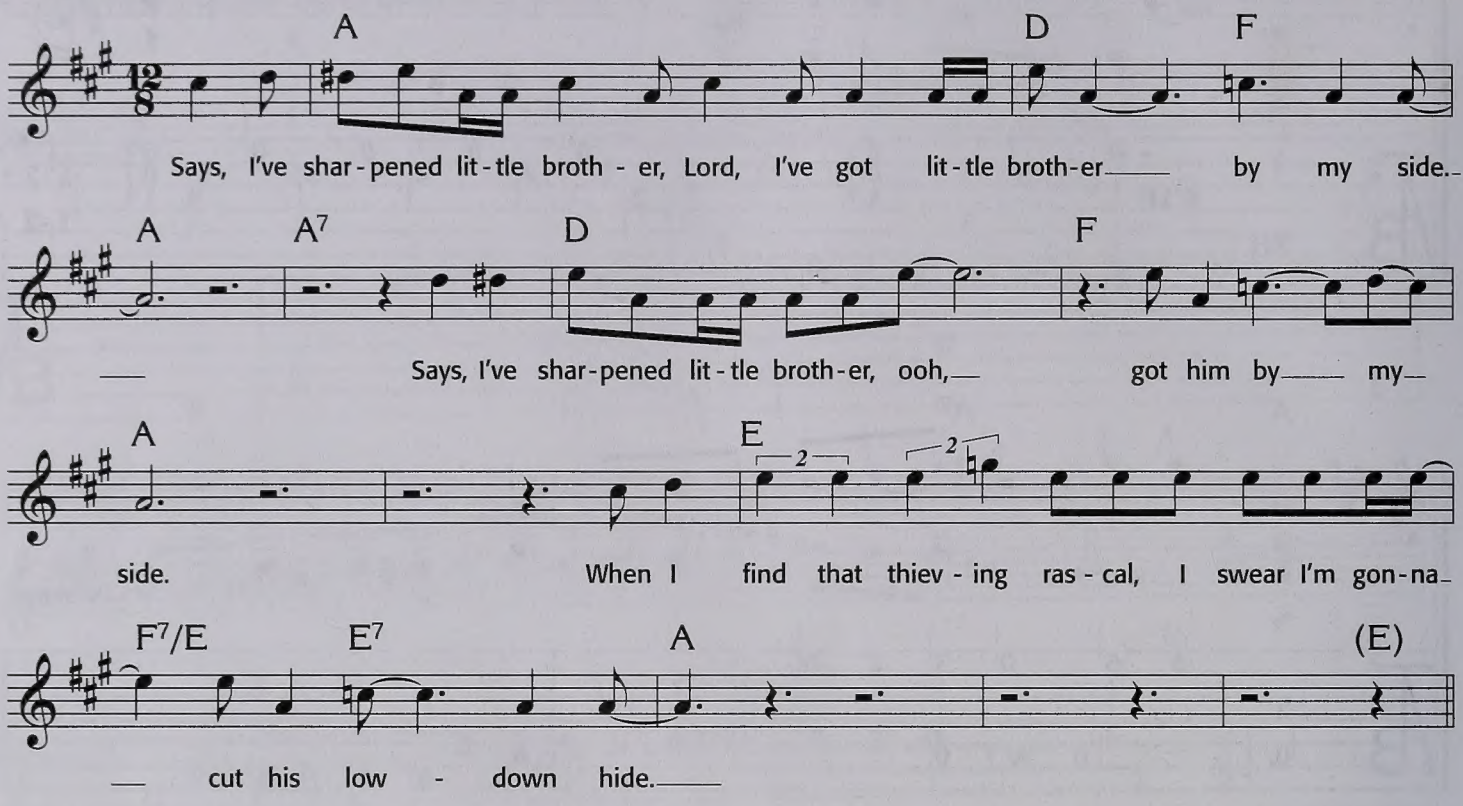



*Josh White*

# Little Brother Blues

## Lead Sheet




1. Says, I've sharpened little brother, Lord, I got little brother by my side.
   Says, I've sharpened little brother, ooh, got him by my side.
   When I find that thieving rascal, I swear I'm gonna cut his low down hide.

2. That's what you think he can carve, wait to he see my little brother strut his stuff.
   But you thinks he can carve, ooh, ooh, oh, oh, oh.
   When I get through cutting that man, the good Lord will know he had enough.

3. You mess with my woman, I'm going to tell you what I'll do.
   You mess with my woman, ooh, tell you what I'll do.
   Says, I'll shoot you with my pistol, I swear I'll cut you with my little brother too.

4. When you mess with my woman, make peace with God or the devil one.
   When you mess with my woman, ooh, ooh, oh, oh, oh.
   Going to shoot you if you stand still, going to cut your nappy head off if you run.

5. Me and my brother, stop our fighting we know we Chicago bound.
   Going to stop our fighting, ooh, oh Chicago bound.
   Says we massacred this city and we bound for another town.

6. Mm, mm...
   Me and little brother bid you all, fare you well to thee,
   Says, we finished our job and we just as happy as we can be.

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